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VENGEANCE

JOSEPH · S · MALONE

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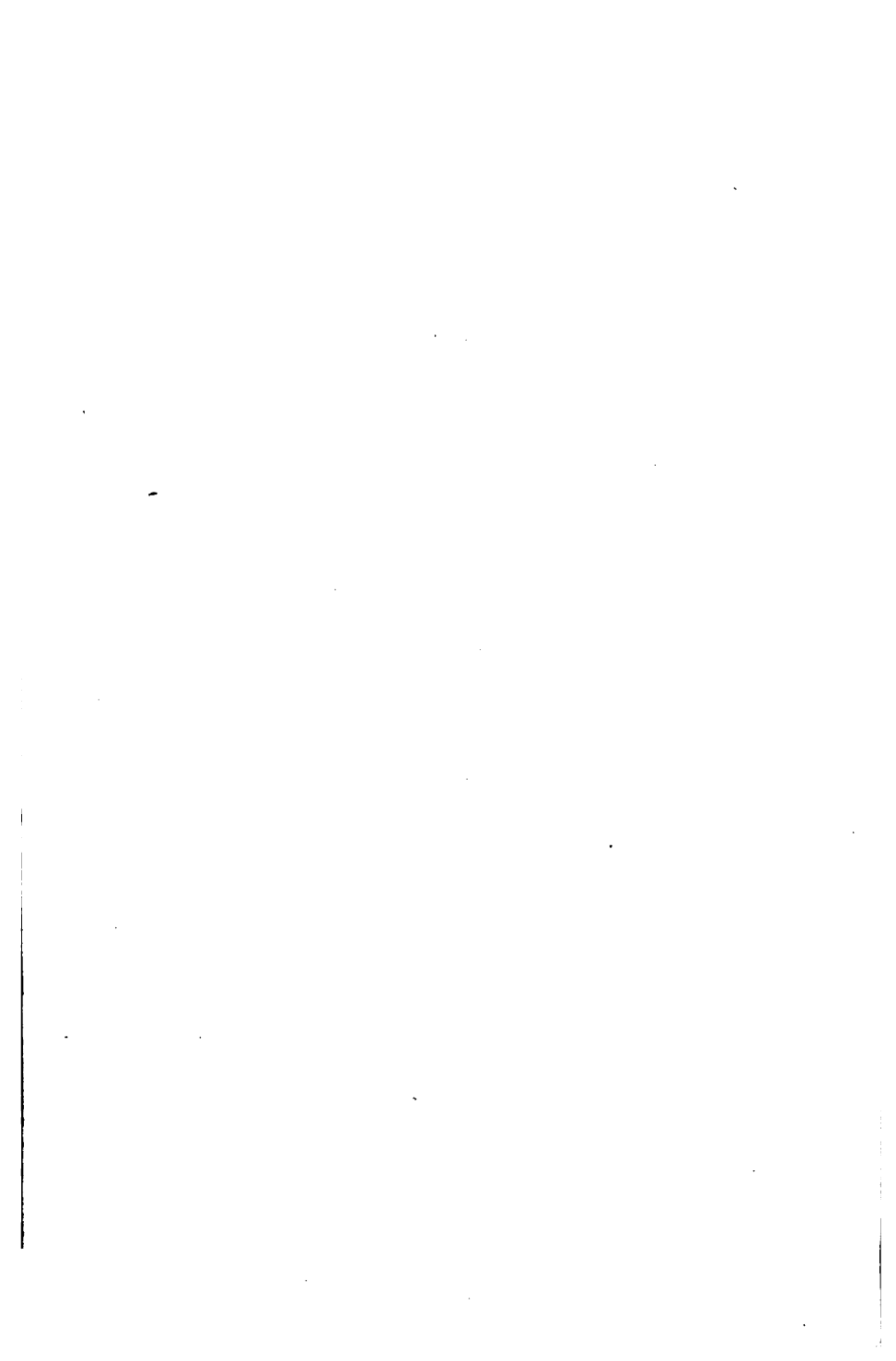
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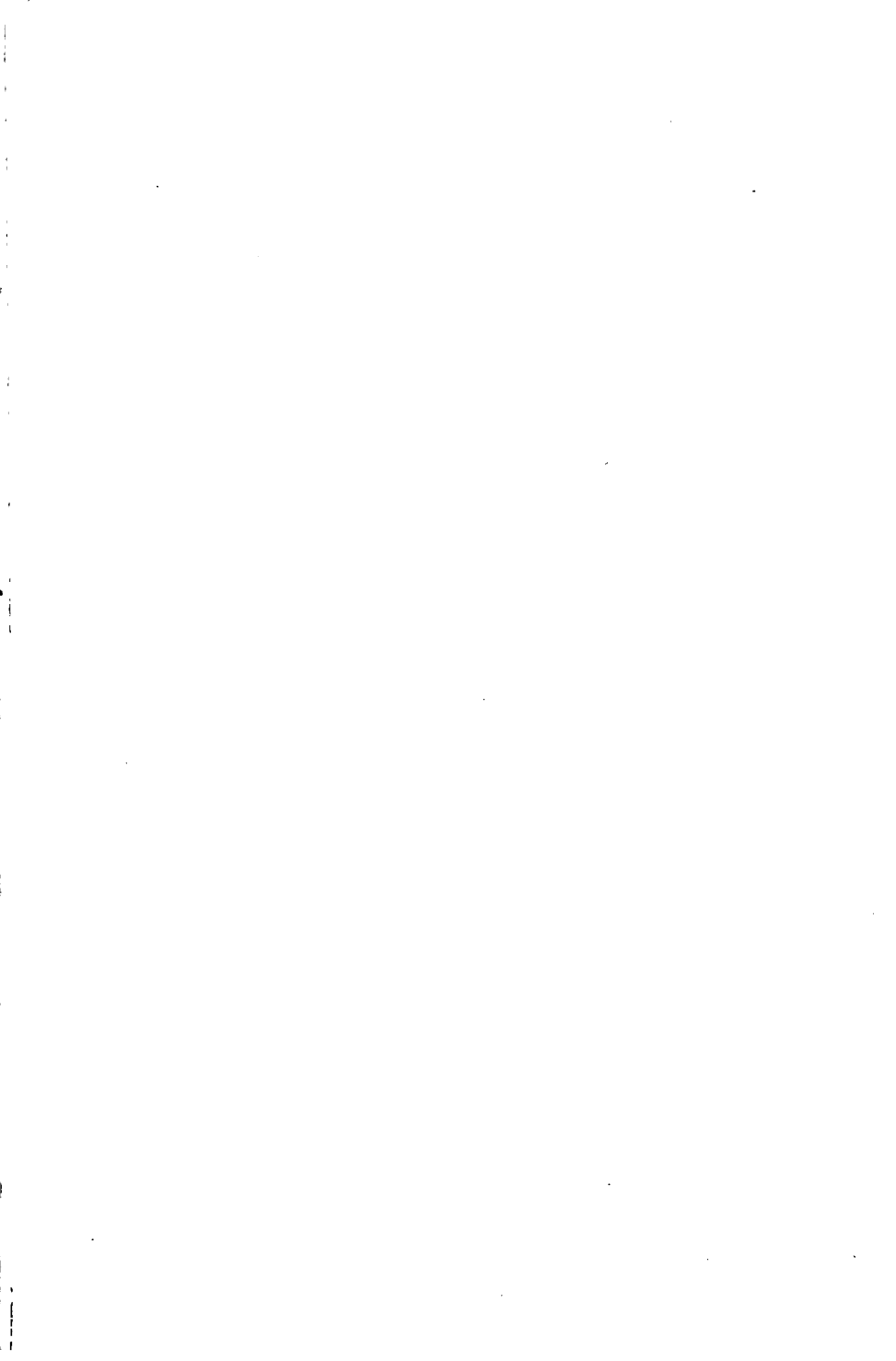
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# **SONS OF VENGEANCE**









"AT LAST THE PALE AND FEEBLE OLD MAN  
WAS PUT IN THE PRISONERS' DOCK"

# SONS OF VENGEANCE

A  
CUMBLER

By JOSEPH S. MERRIN



New York, Toronto  
Fletcher & Co. Company

1904



1. AND FEEBLE  
2. PRISONERS

# SONS OF VENGEANCE

*A TALE OF THE  
CUMBERLAND HIGHLANDERS*

By JOSEPH S. MALONE



NEW YORK      CHICAGO      TORONTO  
Fleming H. Revell Company  
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# SONS OF VENGEANCE

## I

### A MOUNTAIN WASH-DAY

**I**T was wash-day at the Finleys'. The tub, which had served its day as half of a whiskey barrel, was perched upon stones to raise it a little and keep it steady. The iron wash-pot, a great and unusual treasure for that part of the country, having been brought from Oakville when Finley senior had been down there attending court, was carefully propped against a large rock and so fixed upon smaller stones that a fire could be built under it to heat the water for boiling the clothes. An old and battered tin boiler, with a home-made splint-bottomed chair under it, completed the utensils for the weekly day of hard work and bad temper.

Mrs. Finley was "altogether out of sorts" upon such occasions; not that she had many clothes to wash, but she resented having to wash at all. This day she was troubled more than common, because her old man had left home before light with his rifle on his shoulder, and to her questions as to his destination had replied, "Y'u

min' y'r washin'," and was gone before she "could get in a word to sass him back."

Standing at the wash-boiler, rinsing out what Sis, her "second gal," had scrubbed in the tub, Mrs. Finley smoked her pipe and for a wonder kept silence for an hour or so. Her wrath was great and filled her with raging waves of fury. For Pete to treat her so mean, as if she were nobody but a washerwoman, while she was the mother of his children, and had for so many years "done fer him as if he was the onliest man in all the wide world," was a new thing to her. As she thought and thought she was hot and cold by turns, until the usual wrath of wash-days, in which she made Sis and six-year-old Babe "stand around and look sharp," was nothing in comparison, so she was silent; no words could express her feelings.

Sis had been too much awed by her mother's face and manner to speak to Babe, whom she had been watching with anxious eyes for some time. Babe, "between spells" of dipping and bringing water, had built a dam on the spring branch, and otherwise interested herself, splashing in the water. Tiring of these amusements, and not being in fear of her mother, as she was a person with privileges, she rushed to her mother's side and, taking hold of her apron, cried: "Mam, I wants tuh go tuh th' house an' get a snack."

The mother shivered at the sound of the child's voice, and, turning from her work, looked in her face, and

taking her in her arms, sat down upon a stone, rocking herself in the strange way Kentucky mountain mothers have with their infants, yet said not a word. Strangely impressed, the child first wept softly, and then, violently.

"Hush, honey! Mam's heart's broke," the mother said, as her child's grief at last drew her mind from her own sorrow. Scarcely had she spoken when a loud cry came from the cabin, "Mam, cum heyeh, quick. Some men's a-comin' up th' holler."

Putting the child down, Mrs. Finley ran up the hill-side towards the cabin. She put her hands above her eyes to shade them, and gazing down the path into the hollow which led out to the "big road," she saw eight or ten men moving up the hill, bearing what seemed to be a human body. Intuitively she knew it was her husband or her eldest son—the latter had been away for some days—who was being brought home to her. She did not scream after the way of most women, but stood silent and shivering with suppressed feeling, then raising her eyes, sad and dull by suffering, she made what speed she could down the steep, rocky slope, to meet the men who were bearing the dead form. A single glance told her the truth; it was Pete.

They had not wiped away the blood from the mouth, from which it had flowed when the fatal ball from the Winchester rifle had ploughed its cruel way through his lungs. Her first act was to wipe away this blood, put a hand upon his forehead, and say with a sob, "Oh, Pete,

I wuz a-havin' hard thoughts agin' y'u when y'u wuz a-bein' shot. Oh, God! Don't hol' it agin' a poor woman, who'll mourn all her livin' days." Then there arose a wail, which seemed to penetrate the gorges of the mountains and come back in echoes of agony. It smote the men as if every sound in nature was calling for vengeance upon the one who had murdered the man they bore in their arms.

Jim Stokes, her brother, one of the bearers, cried, "Lis'en, Mary, to me. When I heard th' crack o' th' rifle an' then Pete's gun twict, I picked up mine an' fas' as I could git thar, went tuh Bascom's Spring an' foun' Pete a-lyin' on his face on th' edge of th' crick. He wa'n't dead, but th' blood was a-spoutin' from his mouth, an' he wuz a-prayin' so low an' quiet-like, I hardly heard what he wuz a-sayin'. He looked bright-like outen his eyes when he seen me, then he smiled jest as he wuz shore tuh do when he seen his frien's, an' takin' o' my hand, he said soft-like, 'Tell Mary, I'm powerful sorry I spoke tuh her like I did this mornin' an' ast her tuh forgin me. I knew I mought be killed 'fore I got tuh y'ur house, Jim, an' I couldn't bear tuh talk tuh her an' tell her whut I wuz a-goin' fer. Y'u tell her my las' thoughts is fer her an' th' children, an' I'm trustin' in th' Lord Jesus that shed His blood tuh save poor sinners jest like me.' I sot down in th' water, fer I was afeered tuh try an' move him, an' I hel' his head an' shoulders in my arms 'til with a big gasp he were gone."

She listened as if hearing from another world, and holding one limp and cold hand in hers, she walked beside the body as it was slowly borne to the cabin, from which the living man went forth that morning.

When the cabin was entered, they laid him upon three chairs, and, after the children and the mother had been permitted to exhaust themselves in the tempest of grief which swept over them, some of the men took their stations near the house, hidden by trees and rocks, while others departed to warn the friends and relatives and to make other preparations for the funeral.

## II

### GOING TO HIS DEATH

**P**ETE FINLEY was not a happy man on that fatal morning when he swung himself away from his wife and plunged down the mountain path over the stones and roots, while it was yet so dark that he could not see his way. He was an affectionate man, and loved, with the whole power of a passionate nature, his family and his Cumberland mountain home where he had been born, and where his father's family had lived for generations.

The land was very poor and rocky, and it was hard to grow enough corn to bread the family, and feed the few specimens of what he called his stock. But it had been taken up when his ancestors came from Virginia, or rather when it was part of Virginia, and now he could hunt the deer and the smaller animals of the woods and occasionally do a day's work for some of the landholders on the creek bottoms. Ideas of wealth and plenty were altogether foreign to him. He was content with a log cabin, and his rocky acres on a Kentucky mountain side, and never thought of envying any man, however great.

Whenever he went to musters or elections, or to the

county seat as principal or witness in some case before the court, he looked straight in every eye, and was as independent in his feelings and ways as if he owned the State of Kentucky in fee simple. He stood six feet one inch in his bare feet, as straight as one of the mountain pines on his farm, and hardened in life and muscle by a life of toil and freedom in the air of the mountains, until he could handle ordinary men as if they were playthings. He always went armed, and it was a saying throughout the mountains, as far as he was known, that the "craps 'ill fail whenever Pete Finley misses what he draws a bead on 'ith his ol' gun."

No tenderer heart ever beat in a human being than throbbed in his breast, though it was seldom that it could be proved by his words.

But he would give away the last thing he had to help those poorer than himself, and get up before day to cut wood for the sick or to "tote" a bag of corn to the mill for a widow.

A deeply religious man, after the mode of his country, he was always relied upon by the Elder to be present and help by singing and prayer in every meeting.

Now he is on his way to the place of meeting of those on his side of the feud, and if he comes in contact with one of the other side, he will shoot him without remorse or giving him an instant to prepare or defend himself, or to think about eternity.

His brother-in-law, Jim Stokes, had a neighbour who



turned his starving hogs out to live upon the public. These hogs, made wise by having to shift for themselves, found many ways of getting into the cornfield, now in the roasting-ear period of development, where they tore down and trampled under their feet so much of the corn that this brother-in-law, fix his fences as he would, and watch his field as sharply as he might, came to the conclusion that his family would have to do without bread for a year if he did not find some plan to stop their work of destruction.

The hog who moved about on two feet and owned those travelling on four, when remonstrated with about the damage being done to the corn, only turned up his lip and said:

“ Make y’ur fence so as a hog can’t get through it nur over nur under it, an’ then keep y’r ugly mouth shet, an’ you’ll hev both more corn an’ more peace.”

The man who had planted the corn, flashing up in a temper, like powder when it receives a touch of fire, replied: “ Looky heyeh, John Mack, y’u’ve kep’ y’ur stock on me an’ my neighbours fer years, and many a time my children hez hed tuh go tuh bed hungry; them hogs has eat up the food that they ought to have had. Y’r time’s up in these parts. Ef y’r hogs get in my corn agin, I’m goin’ to set my dogs on ’em, an’ ef that don’t keep ’em away I’ll shoot ’em.”

Stokes walked away without waiting for an answer, but with a look upon his face which anyone knowing

him would see meant mischief. Next morning, finding the hogs in the corn as usual, tearing and rending it after their kind, Stokes called his dogs. Soon the sounds of barking and squealing were mingled in the morning air, broken in a few minutes by the clear ring of a rifle sounding from the fence next to Mack's farm.

Grasping his Winchester Stokes ran as fast as he could to the place from whence the noise came. He was soon met by his favourite dog running upon three feet, and bleeding from a ghastly wound. Angry, and as anxious as he was to find and punish the man who had shot his dog, he paused a moment to soothe it in its pain before rushing into the corn, his gun cocked, and every sense alert and eager for his foe.

Mack knew so well what to expect that he fled as soon as he saw the effect of his shot, and when Stokes arrived at the fence, though he carefully searched, he had to give up the hope of finding his enemy, and turn his attention to the hogs. He set his unharmed dogs on them, shot two or three of the oldest and worst, and then, getting those which were alive out of the field, and repairing the fences, he turned his steps towards the house.

He did not permit himself to be deceived for a moment in relation to the consequences of what he had done. He knew that Mack would leave home and watch for him day and night as long as nature could stand the strain. That he would shoot him in the back from ambush, or waylay him in any way malice would suggest, or his

skill as a hunter enable him to use, he was perfectly certain.

He could not bring himself to swear out a warrant for Mack and have him bound over by the magistrate to keep the peace, for, to do this, he would have to swear that he was afraid of him, which he would rather die than do. He knew, too, that Mack would not regard such a binding over for a moment, as the bond was small, and being emboldened by the conviction that Stokes was a coward, and afraid of him, would only kill him the sooner. His only hope of living was to take to the woods and kill Mack before he could have an opportunity to kill him. He did not trust himself to say farewell to anyone about the house, but taking a good supply of ammunition for his rifle, he moved cautiously into the shelter of the trees, and, with cat-like tread, began his search for his enemy.

Mack never went to his house after he shot the dog, for he reasoned that his best chance was to slip into the woods and conceal himself where he could watch the house and see the way Stokes went when he left home, as he was sure to do, and then kill him before he began his search and while he was off his guard.

If Stokes had not seen through the scheme, he would have been shot at the edge of the stable lot, as he leaped the fence. As he moved into the woods he kept his body covered by some tree or rock, never for a moment exposing himself in the direction his foe would have to come. He felt sure Mack was in the woods in front of

him somewhere, and though he kept his eyes always watching for a movement and his ears strained for a sound, he neither saw nor heard anything.

Mack had seen him leave the house and come towards the woods, and was only waiting to get him in range for a sure shot, as he knew to miss or to give a slight wound was certain death to himself. Perfectly still, strained and attentive he stood behind the protection of his cover, hearing Stokes moving in his direction, though so skilfully that he had no chance for a shot. He thought at his next movement he would get it, and lifted his gun to his shoulder to be ready.

Though Stokes did not see this, it showed him that something moved, and he was sure that Mack was behind that tree, and that what he saw was the movement of his gun.

Then began a testing of the men in every element which goes to the making of strength and giving of endurance, in that cool determination and courage for which strong men are noted. The one who first became excited, or lost even a shade of his nerve, was sure to die at the hands of the other.

Each man knew this, and each summoned his powers to calm his spirit and give steadiness to his purpose, to save his own life by taking that of his enemy.

It was a duel which none but such men as now confronted each other could fight. The blood of many generations of hardy, brave men was flowing in their veins—

not surging or lashed by tempestuous rage, but dominated by a will which said "I am master," and which called the whole man to serve the purpose of that one hour, which was now to show the educating force of the circumstances which mould mountain men.

Mack, whether he was the weaker man in will-power, or because he was first in bringing on the trouble (as some say to this day), showed the strain by trying to look around the tree to find out what Stokes was doing. Then Stokes knew, instantly, that he had only to control himself for a short time and all would be over.

Quietly moving his gun straight up the tree and placing it slowly and by degrees so that he could use it as if it were part of himself, he waited and took no notice that Mack could see of the rapid movements of his head. These movements showed more and more the loss of restraining power, as they became increasingly nervous, as well as less concealed.

Then, as if by magic, with the same unerring aim which sent a bullet into the heart of a fleeing deer or a flying eagle, the leaden messenger of death crushed through the skull of Mack, and a dead man lay on the ground, and the terrible Mack-Stokes feud had begun.

Stokes walked forward and merely gave a glance at the dead man. He knew well where he had sent that bullet—as well as if he had measured it—and, going to the end of the woods, he called Mack's twelve-year-old son, and, in a gentle and calm voice, told him that his

father was dead in the woods "jess back o' my stable lot."

Stokes felt sure that every relative, even to cousins of the third degree and their connections, would be on the warpath as soon as the news of Mack's death could reach them, and that he could not be in too great haste in summoning his friends and supporters. His first thought was of Pete Finley, who, for all the reasons moving a mountain clansman, was the strongest among the Stokes party.

Pete received notice of what had happened, and with it a call to come to the meeting place in the rocks back of Smith's spring at "sun-up" the next morning. What emotions stirred his soul! Though, like himself, they were deep and strong, they were so hidden that no one knew of them but himself. He did not tell his wife, as he said to himself, "She'll fin' it all out soon 'nough, an' tuh-morrer's her wash-day anyhow, an' she hez troubles enough to try her temper 'ithout anything else."

The rapid walk down the mountain had made Pete thirsty, and, being near a spring, he concluded to cross the creek and get a drink before clambering over the rocks to the place of meeting. Several mountain paths crossed at or near this spring, so that, at such a time as the present, it was a dangerous spot for either of the opposing factions.

Tom Mack, the brother of the slain man, had to pass that way, or else go a long distance round to reach his

brother's home. As he came near, riding on horseback, it occurred to him to dismount, tie his horse, and look out for some of the "Stokes gang," as he phrased it, since he was sure that most of them would pass along some of the converging paths to get to Stokes' farm.

Mountain men can tell you within a few feet of where a deer will cross a path, or run along a ridge, and they never fail in taking a stand in the right place to cover the deer with their guns. This knowledge, or instinct, if you wish to call it such, was used this morning with fatal effect upon Pete Finley.

Within easy range, from behind a tree, Mack saw Pete stand his gun against a tree, go over the creek, and fall down upon his stomach to take a drink at the spring. Stepping out from his ambush, for he felt himself sure of his man, he sent a bullet at Pete's head.

Either Pete thrust his head down to reach the water at the moment Mack pulled the trigger, or over-confidence betrayed Mack, so that the shot did not strike Pete to injure him, but only grazed the back of his head.

As if driven by an irresistible power, Pete was upon his feet and rushing through the creek for his gun before Mack could fire again. As he put out his hand to take it Mack shot the second time, and the bullet went clear through Pete's body, tearing its cruel way and mutilating both lungs.

The brave, strong man never quailed, but, bringing his gun into position, opened fire on his foe. Standing



“THE BRAVE STRONG MAN NEVER QUAILED”





there, bareheaded, in the creek, knowing that he had received his death-wound, his comrades in the rocks above him could hear him praying at the top of his voice, while the blood was rushing from his mouth.

"Oh, God, help a poor sinner, now, an' take him tuh Heaven; oh, care fer my wife an' children," were some of his petitions, emphasised with reports from his never-failing rifle. Every shot told upon one or other exposed part of the body of his enemy, and how Mack was able to mount his horse and get to his home, four miles away, has never been known.

After firing four shots, Pete fell into the water, still grasping his smoking gun and praying, though now in a lower tone of voice.

His clansmen, brought to the spot by the rifle reports, found him at the edge of the creek in the arms of his brother-in-law, and carried him to a plot of grass on the bank, where, upon examination, they saw that he was dead.

Nothing could have grieved or disconcerted the Stokes party more than the taking off of Pete Finley. He was their main dependence for counsel, and the natural leader to whom they looked for example and everything which high courage and heroic fortitude could show. They did not know how many of the Macks were around them in the woods, or what moment they themselves would be fired upon from ambush.

"For'ard, men, tuh th' woods, an' see who's in 'em,"

rang out the command in clear and thrilling tones from Stokes, who had no time to care for the dead, at least until the living were protected.

No other foe being found, they set out, each man carrying his gun in one hand, and with the other under the body of their dead leader, after the manner they had been taught by necessity when there were no wagon roads. It was a rueful and melancholy task to carry the brave Pete home to his widow and orphan children, who, all unconscious of what had happened, were busy about the varying duties of the labour of everyday life.

### III

#### A MOUNTAIN FUNERAL

**R**OUGH boards cut out by hand, with a cross-cut saw, were put together by unskilled workmen so as to form some semblance to a coffin. Into this the body of Pete Finley was placed as tenderly as the uncouth, but loving and fearless men who were at the house could do it.

He was dressed in a somewhat worn suit of home-made clothes, woven by his wife. This cloth of which Pete's clothes were made was the regular "calamanco"; it is very strong, and wears well under the constant and heavy use of the mountain men. The wool used in the filling is from black sheep, and needs no dyeing, and, when finished, is of a dark mixed colour, somewhat like that called "a dark Oxford mixed."

Very few persons were present, as no one who was not on the Stokes side, in the now existing feud, would come. Not that the general community did not respect Pete Finley, for he was above criticism according to the code of morals and religious belief which pervaded at that time. Even the man who killed him would have testified, anywhere and to any person, that Pete was a truthful man,

whose word was his bond, that he was as honest as the day in all business affairs, and as good a neighbour as any man ever lived next to. If asked, "Why did you way-lay and kill him, then, if you did not consider him a dangerous and evil man?" he would reply:

"He wuz dangerous tuh me an' my frien's, 'cause he'd hev shot me ur them ef he hed th' chance, an' fer th' good reason that we wuz dangerous tuh him, an' he knowed his only hope of livin' wuz tuh kill us, an' soon as he could. I tell y'u, stranger, Pete wuz a white man, an' he died as game as a fightin'-cock 'ith his boots on."

Elder Morgan, who was a great friend of the family, was present to conduct a preliminary funeral service. The main full service, at which there would probably be three or more preachers, would be held at the Baptist meeting-house, a year or more after the burial. Elder Morgan was a preacher of what is called, in church circles, the Primitive Baptist, but, in the mountains, the Iron Jacket, or Two-Seed Baptist Church. After the manner of such preachers, he did not accept pay for his services, but worked on his small farm during the week, and preached once every four weeks at each of his four "ap-p'intments."

He, just as his people, wore homespun clothes, and would as soon have thought of breaking all the ten commandments, or of "sprinkling a baby like a Methody hireling," as of wearing a cravat or a "beegum hat."

He was innocent of each and every accomplishment of

civilised life; had he possessed them, he would have had to learn some new sermons, as his material for denunciation would be largely gone.

He had the physical endurance of the mountain people, and could stand and preach for four or five hours at a stretch without exhaustion, even if his people were "utterly done out" by listening to him. His voice, when he got warmed up in preaching, was pitched in the key he used to call his hogs home from their wanderings at dark to be fed.

The mountain people believed implicitly in him and his teachings, and to say, "I hearn Elder Morgan up tuh Salem Meetin'-house say so-and-so," was a "settler" to any ambitious disputer about religious teachings. A friend to all men, and a man of peace, save when he was allotting the non-elect to their especial place in Hell, he had gone in and out for forty years or more among the mountain people without fear of man or devil, "for was not he chosen from before the foundation of the world, and were not all his steps ordered of the Lord?"

He ploughed and planted his corn, fed his stock, and, indeed, did all his work, however trivial, "as unto the Lord, and not unto men," and was a happy, respected man.

When the Elder remarked, "It's time now tuh bury Pete," the wife and five children came in from the other room, and were seated facing the coffin, where in full sight of his family and friends, the superb form of this

paragon of physical manhood lay, in all its simple and unadorned splendour.

The family and few friends occupied all the home-made, splint-bottomed chairs, and the men who could leave their posts of watching in the woods stood around the Elder.

In the Elder's hand was what remained of a little Testament, such as were in the long-ago sold for six and a quarter cents. It was without the black muslin back, and much thumbed, stained, and worn. It is doubtful if the Elder had ever seen a Bible; if he had, he never alluded to it. It was evidently a difficult task to decipher the words, for he read very slowly a part of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, stopping at the tenth verse. There was no singing. He offered prayer; such a mixture of denunciation and supplication, of simplicity and eloquence, of child-like pleading and rhapsody was like the peaks of the Cumberland Mountains—not to be compared to ordinary things, or measured by the rules of common judgment.

This prayer, like the man who offered it, was peculiar, and grand because of its peculiarities. At its close, the sound of weeping from the family and some others was so loud and intensely "heart-moving," that the Elder went out and walked around the house a few times to allow the weeping to cease before beginning his sermon.

"Bruth'rin, I take me tex' frum th' tenth varse o' th'

chapter read in y'r hearin'. 'For he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.' I nuver seen no city, an' wuz nuver near no big town. I wuz born an' riz right heyeh in these mount'ins; but it stan's tuh reason that whar thar be so many big houses an' streets an' things, that it's a good place tuh them whar gits uset tuh it. Brother Pete hain't got uset tuh it yit, but as he, like y'ur 'umble sarvant, 'll take whut God says fer it, he'll git tuh like it after a while, an' be happy fer ever.

"This city Paul's talkin' 'bout hez a foundation, which means that it air in th' mount'ins, an' air on th' rocks. We likes th' rocks, an' in all these mount'ins whar I goes, I sees all th' houses a-settin' on rocks, which shows that the people wants somethin' which 'll stan'. Th' city whar Brother Pete hez gone is tuh stan' till we all gits thar, an' th' foundation is nuver tuh crack nur move one har's breath ferever. So, y'u see, me bruth'rin, it's shore.

"Then me tex' says: God built an' made it. This shows us that it's built jest right, an' that not one thin's left out whut ought tuh go in it. God is th' bes' workman thar is anywhar, ur He couldn't ha' made these mount'ins so fit fer us an' our folks as He did. I takes me idears o' all these thin's, which I can't see, an' 'bout which I knows nothin' of meself, outen this heyeh ol' book, which I hol's in me hand.

"Now, this book tells me God made th' city Pēte's gone



tuh, an' whar we all air goin', an' that it hez a foundation. What more do y'u all ast fer? Now, this city's bin up thar fer a long time, as Abraham, who's bin dead an' gone fer many years, wuz a-lookin' fer it when he wuz in th' mount'ins, an' seen arter his cattle an' sheep.

"Pete's foun' that city, an' so'll we all fin' it, fer God's made it fer us. That's 'nough said fer any man.

"Bruth'rin, you knows that brother Pete wuz a man whut could be depended on tuh do jest whut he thought wuz right all th' time, an' everywhar. When I thinks that I shall nuver hear him raise th' tune when I lines out th' hymn at meetin', an' shan't see him agin 'til I gits tuh th' city whar he is, I can hardly speak tuh y'u. I hain't got long tuh stay heyeh 'ith y'u bruth'rin an' I lifts me voice heyeh 'mongst y'u fer peace.

"I knows God orders all thin's, an' that a man hez tuh do whut God says, but sometimes we gits in a hurry an' goes off afore God says nothin' 'bout whut we air tuh do. A man ought tuh wait 'til he's sartain that it's God who is a-talkin' tuh him, an' knows 'nough 'bout God's voice tuh know who t's a-speakin' 'fore he begins tuh do somethin'. That's good ol' Baptis' doctrine, fer a man ought to be as smart as a hog an' know his own master's call, an' not be goin' arter every sound he hears in th' woods.

"Y'u knows th' ol' Elder hain't afeered o' any o' y'u, an' this day, while I'm a-lookin' thar at Pete, a-layin' in his coffin an' a-seein' an' a-hearin' on his weepin' wife an'

children, I says—do y'u heyeh it?—that all this killin' oughter stop, an' that right short off."

The Elder closed up the end of every sentence in a high-pitched voice, which could be heard a quarter of a mile or further, in a sing-song, vibrant tone, which was somewhat melodious, and with a "ou, ou ah," which, for some mysterious reason, seemed to affect and move everyone present.

He went on for a long time, and in much the same way, as is indicated by this extract from his "sarment," and, by the time he had finished, all were convulsed with grief.

When the farewells were over, the lid was fastened with long nails and a rusty hatchet. The last nail having been driven home, the men lifted the coffin on boards, put under it after the fashion of hand-spikes at log-rollings, and, in slow and solemn manner, walked to the graveyard, headed by the Elder and the family.

The graveyard was upon a bench on the mountain-side, and not enclosed in any way. The separate graves were surrounded by ordinary fence rails, split from the nearby chestnut trees. Four rails were first put down to form a pen, and then enough more placed upon these for a cover. Around and through the openings between, blackberry vines had grown for years. These vines were never cut, except when someone was buried in the place, and then only enough to permit the grave to be dug. The earth was a stiff, yellow clay, in which much gravel

was mixed. As it was a matter of considerable toil to dig the grave, it was only about three feet deep, and there was little room for the coffin.

The coffin was lowered into the grave, with the plough-lines used on the farm by Pete and his boys, and, after it had been filled up by the men, each in his turn, throwing in the earth, and a mound had been shaped with the shovels, another prayer was offered by the Elder, and the people slowly returned to the house.

Pete was laid by the side of his father, who had, like himself, died with his boots on; and, in that same graveyard, there lay twenty-six men from that family and its connections, who had been shot in feud warfare.

As the mother went with faltering steps from the graveside to her home, the youngest of her sons, a lad of twelve years of age, said to her, speaking for himself and his elder brother, "Mam, nuver y'u min', I'll soon be old 'nough tuh take dad's place, an' I won't nuver rest fer one day 'til Mack's killed."

The mother only spoke with her eyes, but there was no disapproval in them for this child's bloody determination.

## IV

### FEUDISTS IN COUNCIL

**T**HE old Elder, with fatherly tenderness which was not often seen where the conditions of human life were such as to put a mask over the thoughts and emotions of the heart, bade the widow and children good-bye, and then in the yard—we call it so by courtesy, as the cabin seemed, from a little distance, to be stuck on the mountain side as if it were part of it—spoke in a low tone with the men, and, with a hearty grip of the hand, parted from them. It was to him a sad leave-taking, for he knew not who among them might soon be awaiting the same service from him, meeting death by the bullet of an enemy, as had the one they had just buried.

By signs, known to them alone, and a few added words, the time and place for meeting to form plans was made known to all of the men present, so that the council interrupted by the killing of Pete Finley might be concluded as soon as possible.

They knew that when they left the Finley place, the property and the women and children would be perfectly safe, for mountain men warred only against men, and they would not take from women and children even a

morsel of food, though in the pangs of hunger. Indeed, if necessity called for it, they would deny themselves to supply the families of the very men they were fighting.

Back of, or rather above the Finley place, where there were no paths, and just enough earth amid the rocks for the laurel to grow and give the prospect the appearance of a patch of green, and in a situation where no man could come within a mile of it without being seen by the eagle-eyed watchers, the sore-hearted, though firm and constant, partisans of the Stokes faction, the day after the funeral, seated themselves upon the rocks to consult as to the future.

There had been no election of a man to preside, for now that Pete Finley was gone, Stokes was by common consent the leader. The conference was slow in beginning, as those self-contained men were cut to the great depths of their being, and were thinking more of what had just happened than what was to come, and, though no man will ever say it, some were feeling hurt that Stokes did not try some other way with Mack before shooting his hogs. They were not troubled about Mack's being killed—that was in accord with their ideas of right when once the fight was on—but what led to the killing was what troubled them.

"Well, now, whut's tuh be done?" said a man who appeared to be at least sixty-five years of age. "Soon as Mack's kivered in th' yearth, th' guns 'll be panted our way, let me tell ye."

"Uncle Harve," Stokes said, "tell us whut y'u bin thinkin' 'bout. Y'u've seen more o' these doin's than any o' us. Now open y'u head an' let's heyeh."

Uncle Harve looked all round, as if he felt the importance of what he was going to say, and, after sundry indescribable movements of his person, replied: "Y'u knows I've fit in these heyeh fights fer nigh on tuh fifty year, an' I bin hit a good many times, an' mos' on 'em whut hit me air under an' not atop o' th' yearth, an' I tells ye that every one o' them 'ar fights hed tuh be settled by the folk on both sides gittin' so much o' it that they wuz willin' to quit. None o' them 'ar fights wuz stopped by one side bein' whipped, an' this un's goin' tuh be jest like 'em. Ten ur a dozen, more nur less, o' y'u settin' heyeh 's a-goin' tuh be killed, an' as many—very likely more—on t'other side, an' then we'll quit an' go home tuh think a good deal an' say leetle. I'm mighty glad my Tom ain't heyeh, but's gone tuh the low country.

"I hain't got long tuh live heyeh, but some o' ye's hardly outen yer teens, an' I wants y'r tuh live many ye'rs an' git on well, an' not be food fer powder an' shot 'fore y'r hardly men.

"I say, git th' ol' Elder tuh see ef he can't settle this thing 'fore it gits any worse."

A young man who had never been in a feud spoke up:

"Now, jest listen at Uncle Harve, wantin' on us tuh let them Macks know we's afeered on 'em. I say, let's go right at 'em whar we kin fin' 'em, right now, an' show

'em whut's whut. They must all be killed ur druv out o' th' country tuh Tennessee, ur somewhar's else, an' then we kin hev peace, an' not afore."

"See heyeh, youngster, air ye tryin' to larn y'r mammaie tuh milk ducks? When I hearn y'u, I wondered ef I heared a man ur ef it were a cabbage-head busted. Killin's a game two can play at, an' it makes a heap o' differ who's bein' druv. Thar hain't no sense in killin', 'sides hidin' by day, an' layin' out o' nights, a-starvin' while y'r watchin', 'less y'r kin settle somethin' so it 'll stay settled."

The young man, John Hart, did not take his rebuke kindly; he grew very red in the face and fingered his rifle, but he knew by instinct, and saw in a hasty glance at the faces of the men around him, that he would have to submit to what Uncle Harve said, and that any great show of temper, or act of violence, would bring upon him trouble with all now present.

Stokes spoke rather hurriedly, with a low voice, which showed his agitation: "How's th' Elder tuh settle it, I'd like tuh know? They'd think we wuz sick o' the hull thing, an' bein' mad all through an' through at one o' th' Macks a-layin' in th' ground an' 'nother nigh dead, they'll be arter us 'ith all that's in 'em at onct. I say, let's go tuh-night an' git 'round th' place whar Mack is, an' ef he hain't dead, make him dead, an' then send 'em all word that we'll leave th' rest on 'em alive ef they'll git out o' heyeh in thirty days."

"I hain't goin' fer tuh toch no hurt man, when he's a-waitin' fer th' death angel tuh cum fer him. I'm goin' tuh be with ye 'til I gits killed in fightin' men whar kin shift fer tharselves, but y'u jest count me out when y'u goes tuh kill men who hez got the dose and jess a-waitin' fer it tuh finish 'em," said Bill Leach, one who was known by all to be as brave as any man who ever trod the mountains.

Tom Smith then spoke, and said: "I'm ready to quit ef them's hed 'nuff, but I hain't th' man tuh ast 'em tuh let me quit. I don't know as how I want tuh kill any man, an' I don't hanker arter gittin' killed meself, though I'm a deep-water Baptis' an' dyed in th' wool. We's nearly all members o' meetin', an' wantin' tuh git tuh that city whar Pete's gone, as th' ol' Elder told us, but we hain't in no great hurry tuh go thar right straight off an' see Pete, much store as we sot by him. Let 'em come an' ast us tuh quit, an' I'm ready tuh go home an' look arter my craps an' stay 'ith Susan an' th' leetle ones a spell, but I won't be th' fust tuh cry out—no, not by a long shot!"

Percy Miller cleared his throat and spoke his mind after this manner: "Y'u all knows I've most as many o' my folks on yander side as on this, an' that I'm heyeuh tuh fight agin my own flesh an' blood. Ef anybody's afeered I'm not a-goin' tuh do th' right thing, let him tell me so, fer I want tuh hear him say it, ef he thinks it. I thinks as much o' some of 'em over yander as I thinks o'



meself, an' hit makes me feel mighty quare tuh think o' shootin' em.

"There's Bill Scruggs, him an' me messed 'ith one another fer nigh on four year when we fit in th' war. We slep' under th' same blanket, eat outen th' same platter, an' marched side by side over th' mount'ins an' down through Georgi', 'ith Uncle Billy Sherman.

"I nussed him like a baby, an' when a minnie-ball went through me leg at th' battle o' Atlanta, he jest took me on his back an' broke ranks fer th' fust an' only time in his life, an' toted me back tuh th' horspital, an' saved me tuh be heyeh now. When we wuz 'bout worn out an' a'mos' dead frum marchin' an' fightin' side by side in th' war, we cum home tuhgether, an' when we shook han's jest afore we parted—he goin' up and I down th' crick tuh our homes—I sed, 'Bill, we's more 'an brothers, though we's no blood kin, an' we hev jest naturally tuh stan' by one 'nuther as long as we lives.'

"Bill shed th' fust tears I uver seen in his eyes, an' said, 'Sure 'nuff, Percy, it's a go fer uver an' uver.' An' when me baby were took, a' then me ol' woman, Bill wuz with me night an' day, 'til he los' most o' his craps 'tendin' tuh me.

"Now he's over yander, an' I'm heyeh. We hev put our guns tuh our shoulders many a time an' pinte an' fired 'em at th' enemy in front o' us, an' now tuh hev ter fire 'em at one 'nuther is jes' a lettle beyond anything I uver 'spected tuh meet."

This speech made a deep impression upon all the men. They were certain they could trust the speaker "up to the hilt," and that he would be with them, be the consequences what they might; and yet they had some idea of what it meant to him to aim and fire his gun at Bill Scruggs, and it was in their nature to feel for him.

Uncle Harve now spoke again: "Percy, I al'ays knowed y'u wuz a man, an' I knows Bill feels an' thinks 'bout y'u as y'u thinks 'bout him, fer he's tol' me so many a time, when we bin fishin' tuhgether.

"I don't see how we'll be any nearer quittin' arter y'u shoots Bill ur Bill shoots y'u than we now is, an' I don't see how anybody 'll think more ur less o' y'u nur him arter one kills th' tother, er both on ye gits killed, fer that matter. Y'u air both members o' th' Elder's meetin', an' I seen him put y'u both under th' water in th' crick, one right arter th' tother.

"Y'u al'ays talks tuhgether 'fore meetin' takes in, an' then goes home 'ith one 'nother arterwards—first 'ith one, an' then th' tother. Th' boys an' gals 'ould stan' 'roun' an' pint y'u out tuh newcomers, an' say, 'Them old cronies fit in th' war tuhgether, an' they's more than brothers, they can't keep 'way from one 'nother, they loves so hard.'

"When Bill took th' bread at sacrament, y'u al'ays took th' wine an' handed it tuh me an' th' others, arter th' ol' Elder said his say over 'em, an' now y'u mus' hunt

one 'nother like varmint, an' try tuh see which one 'll kill his brother fust.

"Y'u knows how many men I've killed, an' how short my time's heyeh now, an' I say that no good's goin' tuh cum o' whut we're doin', an' I think we ought tuh stop it some way."

Stokes said, "There's no use talkin' that a-way. Th' Macks 'll hear tuh nothin' but revengin', an' I don't see how I could hev done anythin' but whut I did.

"I'd a good fence, an' it turned everybody's stock 'cept Mack's hogs. That old sow o' hisen would dive under the water-gap whar th' fence crossed th' crick, an' thar wa'n't no fence built by man that could turn hogs trained by Mack tuh git thar own livin' off th' neighbours by their wits. I couldn't stand by an' see all my work go fer nothin', an' my family starve, jest tuh feed rascally hogs, whut hurt twenty times more co'n as they'd eat.

"This thin' hez bin goin' on fer years, an' I hain't no one tuh buy my farm, an' no money tuh move on, 'less I kin sell it, even ef I'd some place tuh go tuh, which I hain't.

"When I'd speak tuh Mack, arter drivin' his hogs out o' th' co'n, he wa'n't only not willin' to cum 'ith me an' see whut hurt hed bin done by them hogs, but he'd insult me by jeerin' me 'bout my poor fencin', when he knowed it were a mighty sight better 'an any on his place, an' on any in most o' these mount'ins. He's bin seen a-towin'

them hogs to my fence and then break a rail; so as tuh make a weak place they'd break through."

The young man put down by Uncle Harve now spoke again, saying: "I don't blame Stokes. Th' only wonder air he's stood it so long as he did. Hogs must hev somethin' tuh eat, an' they'll hunt fer hit an' break through any fence rather 'an starve tuh death. Mack nuver gin his hogs a mouthful, 'cept when fattenin' 'em fer killin' time in th' winter.

"He knowed what trouble wuz a-bein' made by 'em, an' hit kind o' seemed tuh please him. I'm mighty sorry fer th' hogs, but *he* ought tuh bin shot long ago. He were o' th' mean kin', an' cum o' th' mean kin', an' he's lef' trouble an' meanness an' death behin' him, o' which he were th' maker."

Uncle Harve replied, "I'm sure that when I were a young man, I wouldn't hev stood nothin' like as much as Stokes did. I'd a flared up like a snare pole, an' done mischief long ago, but now me blood's colder, I sees things different.

"It's a pity we can't see afore us when we're young, an' not lay by, in our givin' way tuh our temper, a whole body full o' sorrows tuh make theirselves felt by th' pains they keep on givin' us 'til we die.

"Ef me foresights hed bin as clear as me hindersights, I wouldn't be heyeh tuh-day consultin' how tuh git out o' trouble, an' plannin' th' bes' an' quickes' way tuh be a-killin' me neighbours. An' y'u wouldn't be heyeh nuther,

but y'u'd be 'ith y'r families, an' doin' y'r work tuh home.

"This thin's got tuh stop soon, fer 'ith our Winchester an' other guns, which air so much better an' th' old long-barrelled rifles o' me young days, an' so much surer tuh hit the mark, every man on us may be killed in a week's time.

"I've 'nough lives put down tuh me account now, an' I wants some little time tuh git ready fer meetin' some o' th' good men I've sent on afore me tuh t'other world. Now let's cool off an' git th' ol' Elder tuh see th' men on t'other side.

"As both sides hez los' a man, we kin all go intuh th' repentin' business right away, an' ef we'll keep at it fer a good long spell, thar'll be somethin' tuh live fer 'roun' heyeh by-an'-by."

"Y'u's gittin' chicken-hearted, Uncle Harve. Whut becomes o' me in th' cou't-house when I'm tried fer killin' Mack? I don't want no sheriff, nur jedge, nur jail, nur rope in my takin'-off. No chokin' fer me! Let me hev th' lead all th' time fust."

"Oh, y'u'll niver be teched by th' law," Uncle Harve said. "Them law officers 'll be mighty particular tuh pass by on t'other side when they sees y'u, an' ef some brash foolhardy one takes y'u up, the jury 'll be shore tuh bring y'u in 'ot guilty.

"Mack hed cum on y'r stable lot, a-huntin' fer y'u an' a-tryin' th' best he knowed how tuh kill y'u. All y'u did

were tuh be jest a minit too quick fer him, an' he turned up his toes, 'stead o' y'u. Ef that hain't self-defence in th' law, 'tis 'ith a Kentucky jury, an' al'ays will be. Th' boot's on t'other foot, fer Pete wa'n't a-lookin' fer t'other Mack, fer ef he hed 'a' bin, he'd be whar Stokes is now—at th' head o' this heyeh side.

"To be shore, Mack knowed that he would 'a' bin in a short time, an' took his chance in 'takin' 'time by th' fore-lock.'"

It seemed from the impression Uncle Harve had made that the old Elder would be called upon to try and make peace, when a man on the lookout came in and reported that a "gal was runnin' up the mount'in like a deer, and she looked like Pete Finley's Sis." It was indeed Sis, who, in leaping over rocks and logs, and rushing through briers, had torn, in her haste, both her coarse, homespun clothing and her skin.

She reached the outskirts of the laurel thicket, and as soon as she gained her breath gave a whistle, which was answered by a man on the watch. Getting the direction, she crashed through the thicket, and soon stood before the men in council.

"Bill an' Sher Miller hev done been shot by them Macks. They's both on 'em lyin' dead at th' head o' th' holler, below our house. Babe an' me wuz down that way tendin' th' cows, an' we heared two shots, an' when we run closer an' looked we seen them two boys lyin' thar dead."

As the torn and exhausted girl blurted out in snatches this awful news all looked at Percy Miller, who was so stunned that he was not conscious of what happened around him for some minutes. When he was able to move again, he spake no word, he looked into no man's face, but those who saw him grasp his rifle with his sinewy right hand, which had never failed him, and pat it, as if he was telling it how much he depended on it for vengeance, felt that all hope of peace was gone, and that blood would flow in many little rivulets from human veins for a long time in the Cumberland Mountains.

Uncle Harve's face became almost the hue of his snow-white hair, and then, after a moment, went red like crimson. He stood out upon a ledge of rock with his head above the surrounding laurel, and, pointing to the valley below and beyond it, said, in a firm and full voice, which had acquired the fibre of battle: "Men, down thar are folks jes' a-waitin' fer me to kill 'em."

Not in ranks, as an army, but near enough almost to touch each other, the men moved on down the mountains, each having a cast upon his face and a gleam in his eye that spoke to all who looked upon them, and to God, of spirits which kindness could soften and mould to acts of love, but which no tempest could turn, or danger daunt.

There in the ravine they came upon the bodies of Percy Miller's twin boys, only eighteen years of age. It was plain that Bill had died instantly from a bullet through his

heart, and that Sher had lived just long enough to crawl to his brother, and to fail in the attempt he made to put his arms around him. Their father did not want them to go with him, and had gone off without giving them commands, thinking that they would stay with their step-mother. He had not realised that they were now men in longings and ambition, and not boys.

When they heard of the killing of Pete Finley, and found that their father was gone, the boys had seized their guns and set out for Pete's farm to find their father. It did not occur to them to be on their guard, and as they were walking up the ravine with their guns upon their shoulders, they were sent into eternity by men they did not see.



## V

### BILL SCRUGGS IN AGONY

“**C**OME right away, Bill, y’r wanted mighty bad down at Mack’s. The devil’s loose thar this minit. Stokes hez killed Mack,” was the call which came to Scruggs a few hours after Mack was shot.

Nothing could have been more unwelcome than this call. It meant to Scruggs much that was against his principles, and that was contrary to his ideas of the Christian religion; and yet, struggle as he might, he felt forced to heed the call and go at once. Mack was his cousin, and also his brother, as they had married sisters, and so he was on that side in the feud which had again broken out.

He could not quit the country, thus leaving all he had of worldly substance behind him; and brave as he had been on many battlefields, he did not have enough moral courage to face the stigma of being a coward, and what men called the dishonour of not standing up, even unto death, for one’s own people when they were in a fight.

The traditions of several generations held him, though

he struggled to get free, when the better things which were in him called him to break loose and defy everything and every man, if needful, for the sake of the right. He did not cease to fight himself, neither did he approve of what he was doing, or justify the feud in spirit or in act; yet he went at the call, and in a dejected and half-hearted way made preparations to take the lives of his brethren in the church and his nearest neighbours.

Scruggs was one of the best men in the community. He was what was called a "good provider" for his family; a sober, industrious, and scrupulously honest man, and was the first choice for deacon in the Salem Primitive Baptist church, of which he had been a member since his early manhood; yet, such was and is the power of a man's surroundings, that he is often bound hand and foot by subjecting chains of evil, and is a captive to the devil to do his work and fight his battles.

As with heavy heart and bowed head Scruggs moved to take a place among those with whom he was allied, he thought of Percy Miller, his brother deacon, and his most trusted and intimate friend and confidant. He knew that Miller must be at Pete Finley's, and that, like himself, he was bound to fight for his side in the conflict.

He did not think of Miller's twin boys, one of whom bore his name, chosen to commemorate a comradeship of many years, which had endured every strain that untoward circumstances could put upon it, as being old

enough to be in this fight. He thought of "dear ol' Percy," as he called him, and of the possibilities of meeting him in deadly combat. How could he shoot him, he asked, and clear, certain, and distinct, without an instant's hesitation, came the reply, "I'll die fust. He kin kill me, ef he wants to, but I'll nuver turn my gun agin' him. He's as brave an' true a man as th' good an' mighty God ever made, an' I'll keep a prayin' that God 'll keep him safe till th' end."

Scruggs thought and talked thus with himself very often, and though he was present and took part in the burial of Mack—there was no funeral—and in the consultation of the Macks, he wore a careworn countenance, and showed in every possible way that he was not a fanatical warrior, rampant for blood, but that his conscience was outraged at what he was doing, and at the company he was keeping.

"Bill an' Sher Miller's jest bin killed in th' holler near Pete Finley's cow-pasture," he heard a man shout, as he was sitting on a log with his head in his hands, thinking of and counting his troubles.

"My God! Whut's that y'r sayin'?" he cried, as he sprang to his feet and glared around with wild and fiery eyes. Then going straight to the man who had brought the news, he seized him with his right hand by the shoulder with a grip which bruised the flesh and caused the man to wince and say, "Let go, Bill, y'u're a-hurtin' me. I didn't do it, an' I'll tell y'u all I knows."

"I was a-standin' guard over yander, 'cross th' field in th' woods, an' heared two rifle-shots, an' in a lettles while Clem Jones and Ham Simms cum outen th' woods, an', cumin' up tuh me, said: 'Two on 'em's gone, an' as likely boys as ever walked in this neck o' woods.' 'Who be they?' says I, an' they says, 'Bill an' Sher Miller. They wuz a walkin' mighty fas' an' firm like 'ith thar guns on thar shoulders towards Pete Finley's house, an' looked as ef they wuz wantin' tuh fin' some on us tuh kill, an' so we jes' up an' sent 'em an answer in th' shape o' lead that 'll do' em fer all time an' 'ternity.' "

The worst enemy Bill Scruggs had, would have pitied him, if he could have seen him now. His face became of that ashy paleness which betokens heart trouble, and he shook as with ague. His gun fell from his hand, which meant to him, and men in that county like him, a complete collapse. In a dazed and helpless kind of way, after standing by a tree and supporting himself against it for a time, he asked in a voice which told that his mouth was dry and parched, "Whar's Clem an' Ham?" As he asked this, he reached for his gun, which proved that his mind had begun to work again, and that he was soon to become dangerous.

"Don't know,—last I seen on 'em they wuz goin' back tuh th' cove somewhar," said a man who at the same time rapidly and quietly departed to tell Jones and Simms to be careful to keep away until Bill Scruggs "cooled off and came tuh hisself."

Scruggs searched every point of the compass to see if he could find these men, and, failing in his search, started towards the place where the boys had been killed.

Several men at once gathered around him, and some went in front of him, one saying, "Whar y'r goin', Bill? Y'u mustn't go over thar. Y'u'll be shot afore y'u cross th' crick, an' whut good 'll that do y'u er us? We're all mighty sorry them boys is dead, an' we knows y'r sot great store by 'em, but it can't be helped now, an' it 'll hurt us a monstrous sight tuh hev y'u killed."

Scruggs seemed as if he was going to die trying to reach the poor slaughtered, innocent boys and their distracted father, but seeing how helpless he was with so many desperate and determined men around him, he had to collect himself, as best he could, and struggle with his feelings, though in an agony which threatened to dethrone his reason.

As he sat there—for kind hands had led him to a log and gently pushed him down upon it—his mind was busy in thinking of the day when he "stood up" with Percy when he was married, and how the old Elder joked with him after the marriage, and said, "Now, Bill, in th' words o' Scriptor, 'y'u go an' do likewise,'" which injunction he complied with, and had his infair at Percy's house.

Then he said to those near him, "'Bout a year after I'd bin married, I remembers when, one mornin' bright an' early, Percy cum tuh me while I wuz feedin' th'

stock, an' 'ith a mighty beamin' face gin me a grip which made my good right hand ache fer a while, an' then he said, 'Bill, make haste an' cum home 'long 'ith me. I wants tuh show y'u th' purtiest sight y'u ever seed in all y'u born days.' I hustled him intuh our house an' gin him a cup o' coffee an' some bread an' bacon, an' then we set out 'ith a swingin' gait, which didn't let any grass grow under our feet, tuh Percy's old cabin.

"When we got thar, Percy jest took me in, an' thar wuz his wife a-layin' on th' bed, white as a sheet, but her eyes as bright an' burnin' like a true mount'in gal, an' when Percy pulled down th' kiverlid, he said, 'Bill, ol' boy, lookey heyeh, won't y'u, at the purtiest sight these heyeh ol' mount'ins ever hed in 'em.' There wuz two red-faced lettle young uns, as much 'like as two black-eyed peas, an' frum that day tuh this un I hain't bin able tuh tell one from t'other.

"'Now, Bill, one o' them lettle boys is Bill Scruggs, let me tell y'u, fer that ol' boy who wuz 'ith thar dad fer four long years, when th' war wuz goin' on, an' who saved his life when he wuz a-bleedin' tuh death on th' battle-field. As I can't hev two Bills, an' y'u hez al'ays tuh be th' fust Bill tuh me, I'll call t'other one Sherman, arter Uncle Billy Sherman. Y'u'd better pick out yourn, Bill, an' tie a red string 'roun' him somewhar, so as y'u'll know him, fer y'u're tuh hev fust choice in this heyeh family.'

"How I watched them boys grow, fer as all me children

air gals, they seemed as ef they wuz mine. Ef I got tuh th' meetin'-house afore Percy an' them, I jest walked a piece on th' path I knowed they wuz a-cumin' on tuh meet 'em. How proud I was tuh sit on th' same bench 'ith Percy an' hev them twins atween us.

"They used ter cum tuh see me, an' run all over th' place, an' I wuz mighty glad tuh hev 'em cum, an' I'd ast 'em 'Which is my boy, an' which on y'u 's old Billy Sherman's?' Th' young uns u'd see th' joke, an' say, 'We air both yourn, Uncle Bill, 'til y'u pick yourn out,' an' then they'd laugh 'fit tuh kill theyselves,' an' run intuh some mischief.

"Now y'r air tellin' me me boys is dead, an' y'u won't let me go tuh Percy tuh talk tuh him. Y'u keep a-sayin' he mought shoot me on sight, 'cause I hed somethin' tuh do 'ith killin' his boys, an' I can't see them boys an' they'll nuver know why I'm heyeh an' not thar. I'd go right in amongs' em' an' hev it all over, ef y'u men 'ud only let me."

Here the stricken man ceased to speak, but continued soliloquising to himself. "I feel like me head an' heart wuz both a-burstin'. I air plumb full o' trouble, an' thar hain't nuthin' tuh make life worth livin' any more. Oh, ef I could jest see th' 'ol' Elder' an' tell him how I'm a feelin', he'd know somethin' o' how I fights 'ith meself, an' could quote Scriptor an' pray 'ith me an' tell me whut I ought tuh do. I mought slip off an' go tuh his house an' see him."

Thus the simple naked soul writhed in an agony which had found its way into every chamber of his sentient being, and as he writhed, his whole nature became vocal in pouring itself out in one great appeal for help and guidance into the ear of God.



## VI

### SCRUGGS VISITS THE ELDER

**S**HORTLY after midnight, Bill Scruggs rose from the ground where he had been lying, and quietly moved away in the direction of home. He had been on the alert, like the other men, for the state of his feelings made sleep impossible. He wanted to see the old Elder—there was a yearning in his heart for him like that of a sick and confused child for its mother—and yet he had not definitely made up his mind to go.

At first he walked on fearlessly in the most direct path, as all idea of danger to himself was crowded out of his mind by the thought of Bill and Sher Miller lying somewhere—he knew not where—cold in death, and of his best-loved and trusted friend and brother, Percy Miller, mourning over them.

He wanted to take Percy by the hand and tell him that he had nothing to do with the shooting of them, and, moreover, that he would search the world over for Clem Jones and Ham Simms, and never rest until they were killed. He longed to say to his old friend, "Jest y'u leave hit all tuh me, an' I promise y'ur that I'll nuver rest 'til them boys is avenged."

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Thus he went on, his lips moving, though uttering no sound, and spasmodically his hand grasping his Winchester, until his finger nails grew dark with the force of his grip.

He was a third of the way to the old Elder's house, when suddenly he heard the sound of a stone as it rolled down the mountain. The instinct of a mountaineer impelled him to stop and listen. What he heard convinced him that a man or perhaps several men were coming down towards the path upon which he was moving.

His first impulse was to stay where he was and be killed, as he was sick of what life then was to him, and what it set before him for the future. But it came to him that he must live to see Percy and to avenge the slaughtered boys.

Quickly he slipped into the laurel bushes, crouching like a mountain lion, and waited to see who was coming. Five men presently came into the path, stopped and whispered together, and went on in the direction from which he had come. He knew them all to be men of the other side, and men who were seeking to gain some advantage under cover of the darkness.

"Shall I go back and warn the men at Mack's, or shall I go on to see the old Elder?" was what troubled him to decide. Arguments, *pro* and *con*, came readily to his mind. Had he been in the feud spirit of his clan, like a wild cat he would have hung on the steps of these men until he found a way to get before them and rouse his

comrades, whom he would lead to surprise the surprisers. Now his heart was too nearly broken; he could not go in that direction, though old habits and feelings drew him twice to that course. His head was in a whirl, and the sick child of a larger growth took his way to the cabin of his teacher-friend.

What he had seen made him very careful. He feared other men might come along that way to join those already gone on. As he came near the place he was seeking, his alert ear told him that another man was coming, and this time only one. In a moment he drew himself into concealment by the side of the path, and had his trusty gun ready for use.

As soon as he saw in the bright starlight the figure of the man approaching him, he was sure it was Percy. "He's bin tuh see th' ol' Elder 'bout his boys, an' is a-goin' back now. Oh, how he's a-lookin'. He's an ol' man all at onct. Looks kind o' dead on his feet. W'u'd he shoot me ef I speak tuh him, or kin I tell him whut's in me heart? Oh, God, whut ought I tuh do? Yes, I'm a-goin' tuh call tuh him, an' ef he wants tuh kill me he kin do it. Nuthin' on th' yarth, nur 'mongst th' devils in hell, kin make Bill Scruggs turn agin' Percy Miller."

When Miller came opposite to where Bill was hiding, the words: "Percy Miller, 's that y'u?" rang out on the air. Percy stopped instantly, his rifle went to his shoulder, and the click of the hammer seemed to be part of the same movement.

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"Percy, don't y'u know y'r ol' Bill?" was what was heard next. With his gun aimed in the direction from which the sound came and without uttering a word or making another motion, Percy stood in the pose and appearance of incarnate vengeance.

Bill threw his rifle down, and, parting the bushes, stepped out in the path right in front of the muzzle of Percy's rifle. "Heyeh I be, Percy. Shoot, ef y'u wants tuh, I hain't wantin' tuh live," Bill said. Percy never moved for a time, then he stepped backwards several feet, keeping his rifle pointed at Bill's breast.

"Percy, fer God's sake shoot me, ur speak tuh me. I'm broken-hearted 'bout our boys, an' y'u too, ol' man, an' I can't stan' this no longer. Kill me, ef y'u wants tuh. It 'll be all right, an' I knows God 'll fergin y'u ef y'r do, but speak tuh me, Percy, jest onct 'fore y'u do it."

There was something in the way Bill pronounced the words "old man" which was fragrant of Chickamauga, Kenesaw Mountain, Atlanta, and other battlefields. There was in the sound of them memories of the march, the camp, and the hospital.

Then occurred what never had been known in the Kentucky mountains. The gun was lowered, and the feudist said: "Bill, I'm a ruined man, fer my heart's dead. What air y'u doin' heyeh?" There was nothing hysterical about either of these men, so they did not fall into each others arms, but clasped right hands, and looked into each other's eyes.

"Percy, I wants ye tuh know that I've hed nothin' in th' worl' tuh do 'ith th' killin' o' them boys, an' that I'm boun' tuh kill Clem Jones an' Ham Simms, ef th' Lord lets me live an' I keeps my eyesight."

"Oh, Bill, Bill, don't talk that a-way. I knows y'u loved them boys mos' as much as I did, but y'ur can't take my place tuh 'em. I'm camped on th' trail o' them murderers, sence the dirt's bin over my boys, an' no man, not even y'u, ol' Bill, kin stop me 'til I see 'em dead. An', Bill, I couldn't hev th' ol' Elder tuh preach th' sarmment fer my boys, nur hev y'u tuh put 'em in th' groun'. God help me, I don't know how I'm tuh live through it all."

"Don't gin up, Percy," Bill said; "y'u an' me's bin in many mighty tight places an' we done cum out some way. God don't make no mistakes, an' when He gits ready, He takes th' top off an' shows us whut He meant all th' time. Percy, I can't go on 'ith this heyeh fight, an' I'm on my way tuh see th' ol' Elder 'bout whut's bes' fer me tuh do. I can't keep y'u an' them boys out o' me min', an' I can't shoot at y'u, no how, an' that means we got tuh be on th' same side, ef thar's any fightin' tuh be done. Cum, let's go see th' ol' Elder tuhgeth'er, we air most thar."

"No, Bill, I jest cum frum thar, an' mus' be in a hurry tuh git back tuh Pete Finley's 'fore light. Some o' y'ur folks mought shoot me ef I stays too long on th' way. Oh, Bill, this air th' worst time o' my life. I 'most wish





**"HE COULD HEAR THE WORDS BEING OFFERED  
TO GOD IN SUPPLICATION FOR HIS PEOPLE"**

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y'u'd let me die that day on th' battlefield. Y'u knows how I'm a-feelin' an' whar we'll meet."

In a moment Percy had gone down the path, and Bill was standing there, as if power to think or move had gone from him forever. After a while he went on, at first as a man nearly blind. When he reached the Elder's cabin, he rapped on the door gently, and then listened, as he thought he heard the Elder's voice. He then moved to the other end of the house, and by this time, as was the manner of the man, the Elder had raised his voice to a higher pitch in his earnestness. He could hear the words offered to God in supplication for his people.

"Oh, my Father, God, help th' poor father o' them dear boys. I can't be along 'ith him, as thou knowest, but no feuds nur murders nur nothin' kin drive ur keep y'u away. Oh, Father, use thy mighty han' an' stop this awful goin' on tuh death an' destuction. An' oh bless poor Bill. Y'u knows an' I knows that Bill's in deep waters, ef he's heared o' th' killin' o' them boys. Father, save Bill's life, an' keep him from killin' anybody, an' bring him tuh me fer help. My people, that y'u've gin me tuh teach an' keep fer thee an' bring home, air seekin' tuh kill one 'other. Take hol' on 'em, an' fer thine own name's sake stop 'em right now."

His voice had risen, and his "ou, ou ah" was as when in the "sacred desk," as he called it. But God knew him, and he knew God, and God has answered ere he prayed,



for the man he wanted was at his door seeking him, with a sore heart and bewildered mind.

Bill leaned against the door, scarcely able to stand, and when the old man concluded his prayer with a "ou, ou ah," he rapped again, and without a thought of fear or ever asking a question, the Elder stepped to the door and opened it.

Seeing Bill standing there, he reached out his strong hand, and, seizing him by the shoulder, gripped him and drew him into the house. "Brother Bill, my heart dances afore th' Lord at seein' y'u heyeh this night. Brother Percy hev jest gone. Oh, ef he'd unly stayed 'til y'u got heyeh. But it's all o' God's doin's, an' is right."

The Elder got an iron lamp, with a wick of old, worn cotton cloth, filled with the drippings from the meat fried for his meals, and going to the fire-place, blew a coal, which he had taken in the tongs, until with it he lighted the lamp. This done, he placed it upon an old, rickety table, near which Bill was seated, and seating himself, took a long and earnest look at him.

"Bill, Bill, y'u're sick, an' hev a high fever, an' ye ought tuh be in bed."

"No, Elder, I'm jest heart-broke, that's all. I wants tuh ast y'u whut I mus' do. I'm 'ith th' Macks—ye knows y'u got tuh go 'ith y'r kin—an' hev jest cum from Mack's house tuh fin' y'u. Ye knows that I hain't afeered o' no man, nur devil, but I can't fight Percy

## SCRUGGS VISITS THE ELDER 61

Miller, now he done los' them twin boys, which wuz tuh me like me own childurn. Ye knows how I wanted 'em to marry two o' my gals an' cum an' live on part o' me lan'. I'd done divided up th' lan' in me own min' an' ust tuh say whum I looked on it, Heyeh's whar Bill an' Lucy's tuh live, an' on t'other side, over th' branch, is whar Sher an' Mary's tuh live, an' them an' thar childurn kin meet every day at th' spring, near whar I were tuh build thar cabins, that all on 'em mought hev water handy.

"Now I'm all torn up in whut I'd laid out fer 'em, an' I'm in a fight, which air agin' all th' good things y'u's done tol' me. Whut kin I do an' be a man, an' go in an' out in these parts 'ithout bein' tol' I'm too mean tuh stan' by me family an' me friends? My ol' 'oman 'll be agin' me, jest as strong as she kin be, ef I don't stan' 'ith her kinfolks, an' I'll hev no home tuh go tuh whar I kin be in peace. Oh, Elder, I can't tell whut it all is, only I won't fight ol' Percy an' him a-mournin' fer his boys, let cum whut will."

"Brother Bill," the Elder replied, "I bin a-prayin' tuh my God to send y'u tuh me, an' I promised Him tuh do a brother's part by y'u when y'u cum. I heared as how y'u wuz in th' wrong place, an' I wanted tuh help y'u do th' right thin' now when y'u wuz in sich a hard place.

"I talked fer peace in my sarment over Brother Pete Finley, an' as I wuz a-comin' home from thar, I was tol' that I hed a message fer y'u. An' now God hez sent

y'u, I'm a-goin' to gin it to y'u. I'll stan' by y'u, Bill, be it in life ur death, time ur 'ternity.

"Ef all y'r friends an' kinfolks, even y'r wife, forsakes y'u, I'm sure Jesus won't, ef y'u're in th' right. Job's wife wanted him tuh cuss God an' die, an' Jesus, He tol' o' much whut were tuh be got by them who forsook houses an' lan's, an' maybe frien's an' them they loved, fer His sake an' th' Gospel's. Bill, people says y'u're a brave man, an' you've proved it tuh be true whar-ever y'u've bin tried tuh this day. Y'u're called tuh a higher sarvice an' a harder one, in refusin' tuh jine misguided men in takin' vengeance on their fellowmen.

"Hit's braver tuh be willin' tuh be called a coward, than tuh gin intuh this wicked custom o' revengin' our selves, that mus' be th' promptin's o' th' devil, an' that's a-desolatin' this fine country o' ourn, an' hez filled our graveyards while it hez bin emptyin our homes.

"Y'u stay heyeh 'ith me, an' no man 'll dare tuh cum over my door-step tuh do y'u any harm. We two, ef no other don't cum, an' God A'mighty, 'll stop this devil's work whut is now goin' on."

Bill was shown the ladder that led up into the loft, where he found a bed. It was now two o'clock in the morning.

When daylight came, the Elder, as he was moving below, heard Bill talking and called to him. Receiving no reply, he went up the ladder to where he was lying, and found him in the delirium of a raging fever. He

## SCRUGGS VISITS THE ELDER 63

was calling for his wife, and then for Percy and Percy's boys, and when the Elder, touching him, asked what was the matter, he told him that he was on his way to see the old Elder, to get him to help him to do the right thing about Percy and his boys; that he was all worn out with walking, and that he couldn't get near, nor find the Elder's home.

"Why, Brother Bill, y'u're at my house, an' I'm 'ith y'u this minit. Don't y'u know me?" Bill stared into his face, and wailed out, "Oh, I'm in th' woods an' I can't fin' th' way tuh me Elder's."

## VII

### THE FEUD SETTLED

**A**FTER the burial of Bill and Sher Miller, the Stokes faction was compelled to stay together to repel the onslaughts of the Macks, who now moved in a body as much as possible.

The man who was shot by Pete Finley, while in his death agonies, was now expected to get well; at least the doctor said that, contrary to all expectations, the man would not die. As the Macks could not move him out of the country, and were afraid to leave him without a guard sufficient to protect him against the Sheriff and the Stokes faction, they had built a rock fort, in an almost inaccessible part of the region. From this place they moved in force suddenly, and when least expected, to gather supplies and to harass and injure their enemies.

In ways which will never be explained, word would be carried to the men in this fort, when it was best for them to come out and make their raids.

The Stokes party, being the weaker in numbers of the two factions, and utterly unable to make headway against the rock fort, were reduced to the necessity of "sleeping out," and being always on the watch.

No men were killed now, as neither side could charge upon an invisible enemy in the rocks or hidden among the laurels. The whole county was disturbed, and there was much talk of the Governor calling out the State Guard and arresting every man on both sides.

While matters were in this condition, the same physician who was attending Mack in the fort, was caring for Bill Scruggs, who was in a most dangerous condition with typhoid fever at the house of the old Elder. Bill's wife had come to wait upon him, and he had the best room—one of the two downstairs. Bill was unconscious and muttered most of the time about Percy Miller and his boys. Sometimes he raved against Clem Jones and Ham Simms, and wanted his rifle that he might kill them.

The Doctor and Elder had many and long consultations as to how this feud could be ended.

One day when the Doctor came directly from the fort to the Elder's, the good news was brought that he could and would take the Elder with him on his next visit to Mack, and that he would be allowed to "say his say" about what ought to be done to stop the feud.

It now became of great importance for the Stokes faction to know of this, and that they should be willing to allow the Elder to go and return. It was not thought that either side would shoot him, if they knew him, but they might stop him or perhaps he might be shot through

mistake, if in the dim light of the woods he was taken for someone else.

The Doctor, in his own way, let Uncle Harve know that the Elder was to go with him next time he went to see Mack, and though it was a bitter pill for him, Uncle Harve could not go against both the Doctor and the Elder, and contented himself by saying that the Elder could go anywhere he wanted to, and come back when he pleased, for all he cared.

Stokes, and those nearest him, were much stirred up when Uncle Harve told them of this proposed visit.

They did not distrust the Elder in any way, but they knew there was some meaning in his going, beyond seeing the wounded Mack, as he was a Methodist and not in sympathy with the ideas and manners of the Primitive Baptists.

"Uncle Harve, I believe in my heart th' ol' Elder an' th' Doctor hev gone an' put thar heads tuhgether tuh try an' settle this fight."

"The Elder's bin agin' this kin' o' thin' fer a long time, an' 'though th' Doctor keeps a close mouth, he's nuver gin th' leas' help tuh anybody, that I knows on, in these fights, 'cept dressin' o' th' wounds."

"Let 'em hev a try ef they wants tuh, an' when they gits done they'll stop, I reckon. That's th' way they does mos' places that I knows on. While that 'ar Clem Jones an' that 'ar Ham Simms is not feedin' worms 'ith thar carcasses, I've got lead jest a-waitin' an' a-prayin' tuh

th' powder tuh send it into 'em. Doctors an' preachers am mighty good in thur own places, but bad as y'u needs 'em whan y'u're bleedin' tuh death, ur whan y'u's cold a-wadin' in th' river Jurdan, they air times when they oughtn't to mix up in doin' whut don't belong tuh 'em. The ol' Elder's kin' as he knows how, but he had better stick tuh his "ou, ou ah" jest now fer a while, ef he wants tuh feel good an' be a-doin' good."

"Yes, Uncle Harve, I'm afeered th' two on 'em air a leetle off in whut they air doin', as Percy 'll go on 'in a gang all by hi'self,' ef this fight 's stopped afore his boys air avenged. Wall, we can't stop th' Doctor from goin', an', as tuh th' Elder, I'm plumb shore he'll not hurt us by goin', as thur hain't a single Methodis' in 'ith us."

When the two old men—the Doctor was sixty-five years or more of age and had been practising medicine for over forty years in that region—entered the fort, they found a motley, dejected, and dirty company of men, clad in ragged, homespun clothes seated on stones or chunks of wood, or standing talking to each other. They, like those on the other side, wondered what had brought the Elder there. Surely he did not care for the wounded man enough to undertake to try and convert a "shouting Methodist," and, as for the rest of them, he might as well expect water to stay on a duck's back as for anything he could say about his belief to stay with them. Then they thought he was not the sort of man to run after other people to try and change them, for "he



believes that what is to be, will be, if it never comes to pass," and if he has anything to say about it, he will tell it to the Lord, like the day he prayed, "Oh, Lord, thou knowest that th' Methody circuit-riders an' dog-fennel air about tuh take all Kentucky."

"Bein' as he nuver were known tuh wrong a man, we'll hev tuh jest wait an' see whut we'll see," one of the men remarked.

Mack was lying on some straw and unable to turn himself without help. He was a pitiful object, when the two men went into the little hut, made from bark, and covered with branches of trees. The Doctor examined and questioned him, after the manner of the old-time physicians, and astonished him by saying in his bluff though kindly way:

"Well, Mack, you are going to pull through this time, after all. I suppose y'u weren't born to die from gun-shot wounds. You need some women about you, though, and a little chicken and such things. I brought my friend of many years along to-day to see you, and I hope you'll agree to what he wants to do, and help him all you can.

"You see, Mack, since I sewed you up and have kept you alive, I want you, when your time comes, to die in a bed and with your family about you to see you go."

"I knows th' Elder, an' I air ready tuh listen tuh whut he hez tuh say," the wounded man answered.

Thereupon the Elder cleared his throat, after the

manner of his kind, and said, "I've cum tuh see ef thar's any way tuh bring this heyeh fight tuh an en', an' so have peace which 'll last in this county. It hain't worth while tuh talk over whut brought it on, ur 'bout th' evil that's a-bein' done by it. Whut's needed 's tuh stop it 'fore 'nother man's killed, so every one o' you, on both sides, kin go tuh his home ur peaceably leave th' country, ef he wants tuh go. I'm aimin' fer peace. This whole thin' from beginnin' tuh end air all wrong, an' agin' th' teachin's o' Jesus an' His 'postles, an' ef we differ on many thin's, as Baptis's an' Methodys, we ought tuh 'gree 'bout this, an' do whut we kin tuh en' all this fightin' once an' forever."

As the Elder was getting warm in the great earnestness of his soul, the Doctor plucked his sleeve to warn him, lest he should injure his cause and his patient at the same time by showing too much zeal and bringing out his "ou, ou ah." Mack looked greatly worried, and said simply:

"Whut's a man tuh do, I'd like tuh know? Ef y'u don't fight y'u'll be killed an' th' only chance y'u hev o' livin' is tuh kill th' others fust. I don't like this sort o' thing any more 'an y'u do, an' I'll quit jest as soon as th' rest will. Gin me th' pledge whut I kin trust, an' I'm done now. I didn't want tuh shoot Pete, but y'u can't say that Pete wouldn't hev shot me, ef he'd 'a' seen me fust. See whut he done tuh me arter he wuz as good as dead, an' jedge whut kind o' a man he wuz.

"My brother done wrong 'bout them hogs, an' y'u, Doctor, knows, as you lives near me, that I don't do that a-way 'ith any 'o my stock, but I ast agin, whut's y'u tuh do, when y'u're shore o' bein' shot' though y'u stays home an' min's y'ur own business, 'cause y'ur cousin ur uncle ur brother tuh some other man hev shot somebody? One side can't go out o' th' country, an' leave it tuh t'other, an' be called cowards an' vill'ans, heyeh an' in th' place they goes to.

"Yes, I 'low I'm mighty sorry fer th' way thin's air goin' and hev hed time while on this straw—layin' like a hurt wild beast in his hole—tuh think a good bit, an' ef y'u kin settle this fight, I'm ready to help y'u."

"Will Clem Jones an' Ham Simms go out o' th' country tuh Texas, or some such like place, ef that 'll stop it?" asked the Elder.

Mack replied in his weak and shaking voice, "I can't say, not by my askin' 'em. I hate 'em fer shootin' them poor innercent boys. Percy'd hev been shore tuh hev sent them boys back, soon as he seen 'em, fer ef he'd wanted 'em in th' fight, he wouldn't hev left 'em to home, but he'd hev took 'em 'ith him. Jones an' Simms hed no good sense. They should hev let those boys alone, but, I hain't a-goin' tuh drive 'em away, but mus' stan' by 'em 'as long as there's a button on any coat on our side.' Ef they wants tuh go, they kin, fer I won't be one tuh make 'em stay."

"Maybe I'd better ax 'em meself," the Elder said. "They can't stay heyeh, fer they're too many agin' 'em. Somebody 'll be shore tuh kill 'em, ef it takes years tuh do it."

"Be keerful, ef ye wants peace, but please y'rsel'," the wounded man answered.

"Naw, y'u 'tend to y'r own business," Clem Jones blurted out in a supercilious way, when the Elder asked him kindly if they would go away, saying that in his opinion this would stop the fight, and that in any or all events, it would be death to them, sooner or later, to stay anywhere around in that region.

"Whut's that ol' Baptis' feller doin' heyeh, I'd like tuh know, anyhow. He's nothin' but an old blow-hard," Jones said to one of the older men in the fort when he walked away.

"Y'u young devil," said one of the old men, "ef you ever open y'ur head tuh me agin, I'll take y'u by th' nape o' y'ur neck an' by th' seat o' y'ur breeches, an' throw y'u down th' side o' this mount'in. I hain't no Baptis', but sich as y'u shan't talk tuh me 'bout that ol' man. He's too good fer y'u tuh cum nigh tuh even in y'ur hell-desarvin' thoughts."

So the Doctor and Elder left the fort much encouraged, and when the Elder reached home he sent a messenger into the laurel to find Percy and bring him to his house, with a guard to protect him. The messenger was successful, and some time after dark that evening Percy

came, leaving a number of men in the woods around the place.

He was almost as of old when the Elder approached him on most matters, but he was as hard as flint and seemingly as immovable as the mountains when the subject of ending the fight leaving the slayers of his boys alive was broached. While they were talking, the Elder was called and told that Bill was sinking very fast, and probably dying. Both went at once into the other room, and at a glance they knew that Bill had but a few minutes to live. He was becoming conscious and had the hand of his wife in both of his and was looking into her face with a wondering expression, as if he was asking questions for which he found no answer.

When he saw Percy, his face gleamed, and a sweet child-like smile came to his lips and then went over his face in ripples of light. He held on to his wife with one hand, and then reached out the other for that of Percy.

"Good-bye, Percy, I'll be seein' Bill an' Sher in a minit. I'll tell 'em y'u're cumin', an' I'll ast Jesus tuh let me take care on 'em till y'u cum tuh look arter 'em y'ursel'."

He then straightened himself, and died as sweetly as ever babe slept upon the bosom of its mother.

Percy held Bill's hand when he felt its grip fail, bending over him for a few minutes with no sign but the convulsive workings of the muscles of his face. Then, as the oak which has withstood the shock of a thousand storms at last bows its proud head and goes

down in a wild rush of helplessness, while in the embrace of a storm which at last masters it, so he, with broken and contrite heart, for the first time since his boyhood days, gave way to weeping, as, still holding Bill's hand, he fell across the bed.

"Bill Scruggs hain't left no better man behin' him in this worl' now that he air gone tuh a better one, Percy," the Elder said in slow and solemn tones, "an' let's y'u an' me, Percy, try an' be as good an' true as he were."

The bloody feud was likely to be ended now, as Percy had seen a new light, and his thoughts of vengeance were put away into Bill's grave.

## VIII

### A CONFERENCE

**T**HE Elder was at the door of his house to give cordial greeting to Uncle Harve, and others of his flock, whom he had invited to meet him for a conference as to the best means of preventing a renewal of the feud, so recently settled, and to devise such measures as would put an end to all feuds in that country.

"Mighty glad tuh see y'u, Harve, an' th' men y'u've brung 'long 'ith y'u. Come right in an' take cheers."

"Y'u axed me tuh cum, Elder," Uncle Harve replied, "an' now we air heyeh an' monst'ous tickled that we air not out in th' lorrel a-waitin' tuh aim our Winchesters at some poor soul on t'other side."

When all were seated the Elder said, "I'm called tuh say somethin' 'bout whut hez bin happenin' in these mount'ins fer some time, brutherin. Y'u knows I'm boun' tuh look out fer my flock, an' not leave th' gene'al run o' folks 'round heyeh tuh th' Methody preachers, who am heyeh tuh-day an' gone 'fore tuh-morrow am ol' nuff tuh tell y'u whut they am arter. They cums an' goes so fas' y'u can't git thar names in y'ur noggin, an' they takes folks intuh th' church so quick, an' turns 'em

out so soon as they takes a leetle moonshine, ur says a cuss word, ur sich leetle things whut th' good Lord 'lows tuh us poor sinners fer His marcies' sake, that thar is sich a comin' an' goin' at th' meetin'-house, y'u can't tell, when y'u looks at it, which air cumin' in an' which air goin' out. I'm a stayer, an' lives in this ol' cabin an' works this ol' farm an' bin a-preachin' th' true gospel these many years.

"I'm a-lookin' arter my folks, an' I wants 'em tuh do like they ought an' quit killin' one 'nother an' live in peace so as they may hev plenty. Whut y'u say, Harve?"

"Whut y'u ax me fer? Y'u knows I'm agin' killin' folks even when th' bullet's a-leavin' me gun an' goin' straight fer a man's vitals. But whut's a man tuh do when t'other man air huntin' on him an' 'll not gin him time tuh take a long breath when he fin's him, afore sendin' him tuh a strange country?"

"Bein' as we air Baptis's an' hez tuh accep' th' decrees o' God A'mighty, I'm a-thinkin' o' havin' a meetin' 'ith th' Mack folks at ol' Macedonia meetin'-house tuh see ef we can't cum tuh some 'greement so we won't be a-takin' matters intuh our own han's every time some un can't hol' hisself down.

"Can't we do this, Harve?"

"Maybe—but you ought tuh min' that thar time down on Red Crick, when Elder Pitts hed a meetin' o' his flock—all true Baptis's—tuh settle a fight 'cordin' tuh th' decrees o' God.



"Y'u recollect' when one o' th' deacons wuz a-freein' his min' 'bout th' tother side's ways an' doin's he were sent to th' floor by a bullet, an' he finished whut he hed tuh say while rollin' in th' pains o' death. Y'u couldn't heer nothin' but rifle-shots fer a while, an' when th' house were cl'ared of all them whut wuzn't down wounded ur dead it were thought best tuh fight it out in th' woods an' not in th' close quarters o' a log meetin'-house.

"I, fer one, hain't goin' tuh go intuh no sich place 'ith them Macks."

"Wall, 'tis kind o' scary," said the Elder, "when men air so quick tuh pull trigger. I min' seein' them bullet holes in th' logs o' that thar meetin'-house, an' th' graves whur the men wuz buried on th' hill 'bove it.

"But can't you all promise tuh leave shootin'-irons tuh hum an' cum peaceful like tuh meet one 'nother an' th' Lord?"

"Them Macks won't cum ef y'u don't let 'em hev thar guns," said Uncle Harve. "They'll think it's a trap. We air too hard-headed an' bent on havin' our own way tuh cum together th' way y'r wants.

"I can't think o' no way tuh argufy 'ith 'em 'ithout makin' 'em mad, an' when I sees 'em gettin' mad I'll hev tuh shoot fust, an' tuh th' right place, ur stop a-talkin' in this heyeh country an' take up a-singin' on t'other side, as y'r al'ays tellin' us we air tuh do in that place whar all good Baptis's whut's bin in th' crick 'ith y'u is a-goin' when they changes homes."

"Now, Harve, we hev jest got tuh come tuh th' end o' all this killin' o' men, an' now's th' time tuh be a-doin' it.

"Jesus Christ stopped Peter when he got mad an' begin a-cuttin' off a man's years an' tol' him tuh put up his weepoon, an' I tells ye all, as air my duty, ye got tuh do th' same thin'.

"Air th' folks tuh keep on a-killin' one 'nuther 'til all th' men air gone?

"We'll hev tuh git th' sisters tuh help an' try an' save thar men folks."

"But, Elder," Tom Pool said, "th' women air as bad as th' men."

"They of'en helps start th' fightin', an' no gal 'uld think o' havin' a man, when he hev set up tuh her an' axed her, ef he wa'n't willin' tuh fit 'ith his people. Thar's my brother's widder, that fer twelve years kep' on a-tellin' her boy as how his dad wuz shot by Tom Logan, an' a-makin' him promise tuh shoot Logan jest as soon as he war big 'nough.

"Wall, one day when th' boy war nigh on seventeen year ol', he took down his dad's ol' rifle an' he cleaned an' loaded hit an' laid fer Logan in the woods, an' shot him through th' heart. Then he walks inter th' house an' puts th' gun up on th' rack, an' says to his mam, 'Logan air dead. I shot him in th' woods as he were a-goin' to Hill's Mill 'ith some co'n.' His mam jes' took him in her arms an' cried over him, an' begin a-praisin' o' him 'ith all her might.

"Whut yer goin' to do 'ith such a woman as that? The worst on hit air, they's all that sort.

"They air all afire 'ith thar feelin's, only they keeps 'em in so y'u can't see 'em an' y'u thinks they's like ice, but when thar sons an' thar husbands does somethin' like whut that boy dun y'u soon sees whut they likes."

At this the Elder bowed his head and groaned. Silence was upon the company, and no one looked into the eyes of his friend.

What was passing in their minds had no result in bringing hopefulness.

At last the Elder raised his head and said, "Bruthren, we hev done los' Bill and Percy, my dear deacons. Bill air 'ith his Lord in th' 'ternal an' unchangeable Baptis' Church in heaven, an' Percy's outen his min' an' wull pass th' bread no more among us. Sher an' Bill Miller cums no more tuh th' meetin'-house han' in han'. Anuther voice sets th' tunes an' leads th' singin', 'cause brave an' true Pete Finley's air keyed tuh th' tune o' 'Moses an' th' Lamb,' an' don't need no tunin'-fork tuh git it nuther.

"Pete air knowed up thar by all true Baptis's.

"I air all broke up 'bout th' loss o' my people, an' this way o' sendin' 'em tuh Glory mus' jest stop, ef thar's any way I kin do it.

"Th' militia can't stop it, we mus' jest do it oursel's by bein' strong an' brave 'nough tuh conquer our own sel's an' submit tuh be like whut air tol' us in th' Bible o' th'

Baptis's in th' days when thar wuz no such things as Methodys an' such like, an' nothin' but Baptis's on th' yearth.

"Harve, y'u hain't afeered o' nothin' but yersel'. Y'r hev killed 'nough men in th' war, an' afore an' sence. No man ever called y'u a coward. Be brave 'nough tuh take y'r stan' 'ith me an' lets us stop this cruel thin' right now."

"Yes, Elder, I'm 'ith y'u, an' 'll do all an ol' man kin, but we air so shet in by whut we hev bin ust tuh all our bo'n days, an' air followin' th' ways our fathers went fer so long, we can't change right off in a day. We'll hev tuh git new ways an' l'arn thar is somethin' better 'an whut we hez bin a-doin'.

"I wants th' young uns that's comin' on tuh be taught better 'an I wuz.

"Th' child'en at school talks at playtime 'bout killin' folks, an' it hain't right.

"A boy eight years ol' tol' his teacher t'other day that his dad died 'ith his boots on, an' so did his gran'dad, an' he wuz a-goin' tuh die 'ith his boots on, like 'em, when he got tuh be a man.

"'Long as boys talks that a-way, an' air 'lowed tuh do it, y'r can't stop th' grown-up uns."

"Y'u knows, Elder," said Tom Pool, "y'u're preachin' tuh us mos' every Sunday when I hearn ye that we mus'n't depen' on edication, but on th' decrees o' God. I've hearn tell o' some schools whut hez teachers from th'

No'th whut teaches more 'an ourn does, an' not out th' blue-backed spellin'-book.

"We'll hev tuh git some o' them teachers, so our boys an' gals 'll fin' somethin' tuh talk 'bout 'sides killin' folks."

"Bruthren," said the old Elder, "I'm done hit right in th' vitals by whut y'u says, an' maybe th' ol' man 'll hev tuh l'arn more in his ol' age than he ever thought on. Let us pray 'fore we parts:

"O, Lord! I hev bin blin' an' yit I'm a-goin' on whut I knows air th' right way. I jest touches th' skirt o' whut thou's a-wearin', but I'm a-goin' tuh take a better han'-holt jest as soon as I kin.

"I hev bin agin' new-fangled no'shuns all my bo'n days; but, O Lord, thou knows ef whut Tom Pool says air true ur not, an' ef it air true an' 'cordin' 'ith whut air thy will tuh sen' us them strange critters whut w'ars sich strange thin's on their heads an' won't dip snuff an' jest walks up tuh people an' tells 'em whut air right, as ef they knowed everythin', we'll try to stan' it ef we mus'.

"My ol' heart am a-breakin' at whut my sheep air a-doin', an' I wants to lead 'em safe through th' mount'ins an' rocks tuh th' place whar they'll git all they wants, an' whut th' good Lord hez fer 'em.

"Help us, O help us, an' that right now, an' in thy own way. Amen!"

The Elder did not use his "ou-ah" in this brief prayer,

but when he rose and shook hands with each one as they left his house, it was clear, if the change had not come which he longed for, it was surely coming, as he would say, "In th' Lord's good time."

Some days after this conference, the Elder, with Uncle Harve and Tom Pool, who was a kinsman of Harve, and who was on a visit to him from Yellowboro, where he lived, met by appointment Mack and several of his party to see if an agreement could be reached by which the danger of the feud being renewed could be removed. Both sides came to the place of meeting fully armed, and while all seemed anxious to do what was possible to second the idea of the Elder and carry out his purpose, there was such a lack of confidence on each side in the good intentions of the other that the Elder was forced to leave the matter upon which they had been consulting as it was when they came together, except that an added firmness was given to the settlement already made.

The Elder went to his home somewhat encouraged, but Harve told his kinsman Pool (who was to depart on the next day for his home at Yellowboro), in his vigorous and positive manner, that "ye jest wait till some o' them younglin's do some fool thin' an' it 'll all be worse than uver."

## IX

### AN HONEST LAWYER

**T**OM POOL had been at home but a short time after his visit to Uncle Harve, when, as he was at work at the back of his house, getting out stones for building in Yellowboro, he was accosted by two young men who had been out hunting.

"Any partridges around here? We've been looking for them for hours, and have not found but one covey," said one of the young men.

"Y'u're mighty lucky to fin' that many. These heyeh newcomers done run 'em all out o' th' country. I 'spec' thar'll be nothin' o' any kin' heyeh soon ef this covortin' goes on as it's bin a-goin'."

"We mean no offence by coming on your farm, and asking you for information. We were told that partridges were plentiful out this way, and that the owners of the land did not object to shooting."

"I hain't mad. I jest like tuh hev a say at th' newcomers once an' a while fer my health. They do rile me up monst'ous 'ith their big swellin' ways an' sich. You act different. Whut mought y'r names be? That's

th' new preacher 'ith y'u, I reckon. I seen him on th' street."

"My name is Keith, I am from Minnesota, and this is my friend, Mr. Gordon, whom I have for a room-mate at the hotel."

"Glad tuh see ye. Y'u'd better cum in an' set down. Y'u won't get no birds heyeh, but some time I'll show y'u whar thar's plenty on 'em.

"I've hearn tell o' y'u, that ye takes up fer us folks as wuz bo'n an' raised in this country when th' thievin' boomer air a-runnin' us down, an' I'll do anythin' I kin fer y'u."

"We don't want to take your time from your work, but we would like to rest a while and have a talk with you. I am much interested in this country, but more in the people who settled it."

"Cum in, then. I hain't no ways pressed fer time. Them rocks 'll stay here an' wait fer me. I reckon them boomers 'll not cum an' tote 'em off—that 'ould be too much like work. They mostly cums heyeh to keep from work, an' tuh git rich off them whut hez tuh do it. Don't ye open y'r eyes too wide at hearin' a mountain man let go 'ith his mouth agin' 'em, fer we hain't bin used tuh sich bossin' an' orderin' 'roun' as they bin a-givin' us."

After the men went into the cabin and had taken seats, and Pool had lighted his cob pipe, the conversation began again, Keith and Gordon making a



study of a mountain man in his home, and Pool, though they did not suspect it, searching them through and through with his sharp mountain wits.

"Ye wuz struck 'ith wonder, I reckon, when ye seed that town. It hain't nat'ral like fer these parts," Pool remarked between the puffs at his pipe.

"Yes," replied Keith, "it seemed as though I had really come upon the days of the Arabian Nights, and that Aladdin must have rubbed his lamp and brought such a city, with its wide paved streets and handsome buildings, up from the ground, or down from the air in a night."

"I don't know whut nights an' lamps hez got tuh do 'ith it, but I reckon that's th' way y'u talks whar y'u cums from, but thar hez bin a power o' hard work done by us folks an' th' niggers from Alabamy tuh dig that tunnel under th' Gap, an' do whut's bin done hereabouts.

"Reckon rubbin' lamps an' sich won't work in these mount'ins, ef it does whar y'u cums from."

"I was only repeating something I had read in a story to show the surprise I felt at what appeared so wonderful to me.

"When I looked for a few shanties, like we have in new towns in the West, with muddy streets, and expected that everybody would be living in shacks, and find all the comforts and luxuries of a first-class city, I thought it looked like magic, rather than the works of man."

"It were th' works o' man, I tell y'u, an' hard works, too; 'ith th' help o' oxen, horses, an' mules, 'ith steam shovels an' sich thrown in fer good measure an' keepin' man a-goin' on fast as he could fer his life."

Here Mr. Gordon asked: "Have the newcomers abused the native people much, as I have been told?"

"'Bused 'm? My Lord! they hev tried tuh a few times; but they hain't so slow tuh learn a thing ur two as y'u mought think when y'u sees 'em a-swellin' up an' talkin' like they hed cum heyeh tuh ride everythin' whut could move. Ye sees 'em a-cumin' down from th' hotels like as ef they hed a saddle an' bridle in their arms an' wuz a-goin' tuh put 'em on th' fust man they met an' ride him 'til he drapped. They hez l'arned tuh leave them ridin' thin's to home now, an' wait till they goes back whar they cums from afore they uses 'em.

"Ef they wishes tuh go home in a chist o' ice, let 'em try tuh put that 'ere saddle an' bridle on one o' us."

"Were many of them hurt by the mountain men?" Keith inquired.

"Not less they hurt tharsel'ves a-runnin' up th' slope, ur a-fallin' over somethin' whut wuz in thar way. We don't rear 'roun' an' cuss when we air insulted like they does, we jest pints a Winchester an' pulls th' trigger, an' lets th' tother man cuss, ef he wants tuh, in t'other country, ef that's whut he likes. We hain't goin' tuh disgrace ourse'ves 'ith he'rin' bad words a-flyin' 'roun' our heads. *We never quarrels—we fights!*

"Tuh see 'em when they air achin' tuh show how big they air afore somebody who hez jest cum, by cussin' some mount'in man an' makin' fun on him fer his clo'es an' sich, takin' a blue streak on thar legs tuh git out o' range, air jest 'nough tuh make a dog die laughin'."

"That is very interesting, Mr. Pool," Gordon remarked; "but are you native people robbed often?"

"They don't dar' rob us. They robs each other, an' th' poor simple folks whut cums heyeh frum furrin parts. They meets the newcumers at th' train an' follers 'em tuh th' hotels an' boardin'-houses, an' nuver gives 'em any rest, ef they thinks they hez got any money, till by thar lies an' sich they squeezes 'em dry; but they knows ef they lies tuh us they'll wish powerful bad they hed nuver heard tell o' a lie 'fore they air many days older."

"Do you think that such violent measures on your part are right, when you have all the usual courts of justice in the country?"

"We hev got no time fer lawin' an' no money tuh pay lawyers. Thar hain't a lawyer heyeh but whut cum from somewhar outside o' th' mount'ins, an' we air afeered tuh trust 'em.

"The Jedge air one o' 'em, too, an' so when ye gits tuh lawin' 'ith thieves an' hez thieves all 'roun' y'u, th' bes' thin' tuh do air tuh gin up whut hez bin took from y'u an' go back deeper into th' mount'ins. I think we'll all hev to do that afore long, anyhow, for it's gittin' so crowded heyeh now, we can't hardly git our breath."

"But, Mr. Pool," Mr. Gordon said, "my friend Keith here is not the kind of a lawyer you are speaking about. I know from the talks that I have had with him that his purpose is always to stand for that which is right."

"I knows that jest as well as y'u does. He nuver 'ould 'a' set down in my house ef he wuz like whut my ol' preacher calls 'wolves in sheep's clothin'.' No man whut I believes tuh be a liar ur a thief could set down in my house, when I wuz at home."

"May I ask how you find out about persons so soon, and gauge their characters so surely?" Mr. Gordon asked.

"We feels an' we watches. We sees who a man goes 'ith, an' we listens tuh fin' out who talks well o' him an' who talks agin' him.

"I done hearn a lot o' them boomers cuss this man Keith. They sez he takes th' side o' th' mount'in people, an' he hez got tuh be run out o' this place.

"Then I sees him, 'ithout his knowin' it, tendin' tuh his own bizness an' not struttin' up an' down th' streets, an' standin' on th' street corners talkin' big an' cussin' loud.

"I'm boun' tuh use me eyes an' wits tuh git along, an' I takes him fer an' honest man an' trusts him. Ef he thinks he kin hide from us people ye'll jest hev to go intuh a cave an' stay thar, an' maybe ye'll fin' somethin' in thar whut 'll make ye git out o' it quicker 'an ye went in."

"Do you go to church anywhere, Mr. Pool?" the preacher, true to his calling, asked.

"Not fer some time. I did try, but I'm a Baptis' tuh me backbone, from out tuh in, from top tuh toe, an' all 'roun'.

"I bin uset tuh Elder Morgan up whar I cum from, an' I can't fin' no preacher 'roun' heyeh like him.

"I went to whut they *calls* th' Baptis' meetin'-house down heyeh, but th' preacher were dressed up in fine clo'es an' stood stiff as stil'ards. He gin out th' hyme from a book, an' they hed whut they calls a organ in th' corner whut squeaked an' roared all th' time they wuz a-singin'.

"Then the preacher hed no holy tone when he said his say, but just talked like a lawyer in cou't—ur a candidate fer th' Legislatater. I wuz plumb done out by it all, an' when I ast one o' th' deacons 'bout it, an' ef this wuz a real Baptis' church, he laughed in my face an' said it were a missionary Baptis', ur some sich word, an' not ol' Iron Jacket, like them in th' woods."

"I will be glad to have you come to our church, and worship with our people. We will be strange to you, no doubt, but we will make you welcome, and try to do you all the good we can," said Gordon.

"Wall, I'm a cummin'. I hearn talk o' a good many o' our people cummin' tuh hear y'u, 'cause these boomers air down on y'u an' y'r church 'cause y'u're from th' No'th, an' won't take sides agin' us folks. Ye'll be seein' some on us nex' Sunday, I spect."

At this point Mr. Keith rose, saying, "We will go now. I am glad to have met you, and am coming out here to

see you again, if you do not object. I have been given an insight to many things by what you have said."

"Wall, both o' ye air welcome tuh cum at any time. I'll show ye whar to go a-huntin', night ur day, ef ye'll let me know in time when ye air cummin', an' ef its birds ur varmints y'u're arter."

Gordon and Keith had much to talk over as they walked back to the hotel.

"Gordon, these are the wisest people I have ever met in the way they put into use the very small amount of knowledge they have. Their senses are very sharp, made so by what they have had to encounter in subduing such a country as this, and in getting a living out of its inhospitable soil."

"Yes," replied the minister, "they are brave and sincere, and will suffer anything for what they believe to be right. Ignorant as their preachers are, they have, by unending reiteration, taught them that they are near to God, and that He will save and keep them.

"It is better to have a few truths, and to thoroughly put them into the minds and souls of the people, than to go over a vast continent of truth, and not even know well the stopping places on your journey."

## X

### AT KEITH'S OFFICE

**M**R. KEITH was surprised most agreeably when he entered his office one morning to find Thompson, a leading man among the mountaineers, awaiting his coming.

Mr. Thompson was a man of better education than most of the natives, had often attended the United States Court at Louisville, and had been a member of the State Legislature. He accosted Mr. Keith with the statement, "I have heard that the people who are running this town are down on you for speaking up for our folks whenever you get a chance, and that makes me come to you when I need a lawyer to help me out of a scrape."

"Glad to see you, my friend, and put myself at your service at once for what I can do in your behalf," Mr. Keith replied.

"Well, I'll go right at my business like a rifle-shot, and I won't mince my words in telling you how I'm bein' treated by them newcomers who think they own all this country, and that nobody has any right here but themselves. When they run over me, they will, if

alive, want to be somewhere else than around these parts."

"Please give me all the facts, and we will see what ought to be done," Mr. Keith said.

"It is this way: I've a tract of land, most of which runs up into the mountains. My grandfather took it up on a warrant from the State of Virginia, and settled on it when it was part of that State. My father got it from him and it came to me by the will of my father as my part of his property. Up on the side of the mountains, near the Tennessee line, the prospectors have found the richest bed of iron ore in this region. This ore is well over on my land. The line between it and that owned by the Company running the town, is three or four hundred yards west of this bed of iron, so there's no way to get near the ore without I'm willin'. They sent men to me to try and buy my land. I did not know of the iron bein' on it, but I didn't want to sell it. I didn't need the money and I wanted to keep every acre I got from my father for my children. These men kept botherin' me to sell, till I began to think there must be some mighty good reason for their comin' so often, and I went up there to see if I could find out what it was that made them so anxious to get that poor mountain land. I found when I got there a heap of holes dug by some persons and in nearly every one on my land signs of iron ore that was very rich. I put some lumps of this ore in my pockets and without goin' home took the train for Cedarville to see a man



there who knows all about ore, and runnin' such things. This man just as soon as he saw the lumps said right out, 'You've got some mighty fine specimens of iron ore here. Where did you get them?' 'Oh, just up back of my house on the mountain.' 'Then you are a rich man, if there's much of this kind of ore there,' was the reply. 'Whole mountain full of it,' I told him, and then said he, 'Keep your wits about you, Thompson, and hold on to it like grim death, for this kind of thing is just what them speculators down your way have been searchin' high and low for ever since they landed in the country. They'll scheme night and day to get that land, and you'll have to sleep with one eye open to save it from them, let me tell you.' I answered him by saying, 'If anybody can find a man in my tribe nappin' so as to take his land, let him come on and do it.' I had hardly got home when the manager came himself, and in a high and mighty manner told me that he would come to the point at once and offer me five dollars an acre for two hundred acres of my worthless mountain land, as he was too busy to waste any more time on such a small matter. His way made me mad as fire in a minute, and I told him that I had no land to sell, and if that was all the business he had with me, he might as well go on his way at once. At this he grew as red in the face as a turkey cock, and said things so fast and of such a character that I'll not repeat them even to a lawyer.

"In about a week, Tom Pool, a friend of mine, came to me and said that they had asked him to see if he could

persuade me to sell the land. By this time I had posted myself by writin' to Louisville and consultin' other men who knew a thing or two about such matters, and I told Tom to go back to them that had sent him and tell them that they couldn't buy one inch of my land for love or money; that they could go on the land and mine as much ore as they wanted for their huge steel plant by paying me one dollar for each ton they took away. Tom told them this and come right back to me and said, 'They plumb swore themselves black and blue. Say, sich folks as they is air too dirty-mouthed fer white folks. Y'u'd better look out fer 'em, fer they air goin' tuh git that lan' fer certain an' shore they says.' I got Tom and some more like him I could depend on to watch them boomers, and they report that yesterday a surveyor was on the land and run a new line that puts all the ore on their side. Tom said he went up and asked the manager, who was on hand, what they were doin', and he got fer an answer that they had searched and found that the line was wrong and were only making it right. 'What 'll Thompson do about this?' Tom asked. 'If he don't like it he can just help himself at the law just as soon as he likes,' was the reply."

"Ah, I see their plan. It is to force you to ask the Courts to help you, so that if they fail in getting them to work in their interest, as they expect to do, they can, by postponements and appeals, work the mines for years and wear you out by expense and worry until you will be

glad to compromise with them upon the best terms you can get."

"Compromise, did you say? Do you or they know what that means to us in these mountains? We give or keep all. There's no betwixt or between with us. Compromise! When I know I'm right, I'll die first. And let me tell you that those who are with me are lions' whelps, and 'll follow in my steps to the last of the race."

"When can you bring me your papers to examine?" Mr. Keith asked.

"I have 'em here," Thompson replied, and immediately took from his pocket a bundle of papers, which Mr. Keith took, and untying it, laid the papers upon his desk. The first one was from the Governor of Virginia.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, June 1, 1785.

No. 3913.

John Thompson is entitled to the proportion of land allowed a Captain of the Continental Line for three years' service.

P. HENRY.

THO. MERRIWETHER.

The next paper was a warrant issued June 21, 1785, to Captain John Thompson, and then a transcript from the Court showing that this warrant had been located upon the land now in question, and that the metes and bounds were just as now claimed by the man who was occupying it.

When Keith had seen all these papers and considered them for a time, he told Thompson that his title to the land was perfect, and that he could maintain his right against all comers.

"I am only troubled," he said, "as to the best way to save your time and money in keeping safe what is your inheritance. Give me two or three days to look into the rulings of your Supreme Court and to gain some more information of the practice of the Circuit Court in this district, and I think I will find a way to checkmate these persons who are after your land."

## XI

### A REBUFF

**W**HEN Thompson came for further advice, he told Keith that he had found out that possession was to be taken of his land in a few days according to the last survey. Keith served a notice upon the manager of the company that he must keep off Thompson's land and that the necessary means would be taken to protect all and sundry of the rights of his client, which only still further exasperated him and his party. When Keith met some of them upon his return to the hotel, he was given to understand, in a way which it was impossible to mistake, that wrath was to be visited upon him personally for acting in the capacity of an attorney in behalf of his client. His friend, Gordon, gave him further evidence of this by warning him of coming danger in relating what had been said to him by some angry person who, knowing him to be a friend and companion of Keith, had visited some of their newly excited fury upon him. So unpleasant was the situation that, had it been possible, others quarters would have been found.

As there was nothing to do but to remain where they

were, the young men drew closer together and supported each other in every possible way. Soon it was clear that so far as social and business matters were concerned, they were to be altogether ignored and left to their own plans for happiness and success. In a day or two they were greeted with the sight of a company of armed men under the lead of the manager, prepared for an excursion into the mountains. It was a picturesque gathering, clad as they were in the costume of hunters and bearing the finest arms which could be procured.

Keith and Mr. Gordon quietly passed through this crowd of men, who were in such high spirits that they were mixing profanity, jokes, and hunting songs, in a way to express their ideas of a grand time. Not noticing the remarks, which were made with the intention of insulting and exasperating them, they walked on to Keith's office.

"I fear much bloodshed," said the young lawyer, "if Thompson gets an inkling of this move in time to reach the place where the mines are to be opened. He has the law on his side, and has an intelligent grasp of the situation. He will shoot those men without a qualm of conscience. He has the mountain people with him, and it appears as though we are on the eve of a war which will end in driving all these newcomers out of the country unless the State Guard is called into service for their protection."

"All we can do is to await results. Those men would

spurn any counsel or advice which could be given, and they must be left to eat the fruit of their doings," Mr. Gordon answered.

A few hours later, while Keith was busy at his desk, he was startled by seeing Tom Pool enter his office. It was evident that Pool had travelled rapidly, and was somewhat out of breath from his exertions.

"What's happened?" Keith asked with much emphasis.

"Wall, John sent me tuh tell y'u 'bout it. He thought he'd better stay 'roun' a spell 'fore he cum back tuh town. We wuz thar fust, 'cause I knowed all whut they wuz a-tryin' to do. I sent word tuh John, an' he hed 'nuff men behin' trees tuh kill all them folks quicker than a cat kin lick her foot. I kinder felt sorry fer th' crowd on 'em, but thar's no fools so bad as them as am fools fer money. They jest cum on an' druv th' wagon, whut th' picks an' men wuz in, plumb 'cross John's line, and done jest as ef they hed deeds frum God A'mighty. They wuz mighty busy gittin' ready tuh dig when John cum frum behin' a tree, an' his voice sang out like th' crack o' a rifle 'ith fight all through it: 'Y'u're on my lan', an' I order ye tuh git off it an' tuh do it quick, too.' When John spoke, th' men who wuz gittin' th' picks out o' th' wagon stood still an' wouldn't move a peg. The big man 'ith a yaller jacket on him, he got up in his stirrups an' cussed 'em blue, tol' 'em he hed hired 'em tuh do whut he tol' 'em, an' that they hed tuh go on an' dig th' iron out o' th' lan'. 'Thompson's only bluffin', he dassen't shoot. I'll

show him who's th' boss 'roun' heyeh.' One o' his men then opened his head an' jest tol' him, 'I'm ready tuh work fer a livin' when thar's work fer me tuh do, but I got a wife an' children at home, an' I hain't a-goin' tuh throw my life away in somebody else's fuss, not by a long shot.' 'I'm a-goin' tuh turn off every man whut won't do what I tells 'em,' th' big man in th' yaller jacket yelled. 'We knows John Thompson better 'an y'u, an' he'll shoot his own brother, ef he'd try tuh stick his pick intuh this heyeh groun'—much less th' likes o' us. John 'ud rather shoot than eat any day, an' he hain't like folks as don't keep thur words.' 'Gin up y'r picks, ye cowards, an' go home,' th' yaller-jacket man yelled. 'Ye dassen't call men whut wuz bo'n an' bred in Kentucky cowards; we'll show ye ef we air cowards.' Then this man reached intuh his clo'es an' brings out a army pistol an' every mount'in man thar a-follerin' him, they jest went plumb over tuh John an' got behin' a tree an' wuz ready fer work afore ye could say Jack Robinson. Yaller Jacket looked like 'twuz th' last day in th' mornin' tuh him fer a minit ur two, but when th' white hed gone out o' his face an' th' red cum back, he yelled tuh his folks tuh cum on, that he wuz a-goin' to dig his own self. Not a single one o' them fellers whut wuz dressed out like jay birds 'uld move a peg. Thar stomachs wuz sick, an' they wuz wantin' to see home mighty bad. Yaller Jacket cussed 'em worse 'an he did us folks, an' jess grabbed a pick an' made like he wuz a-goin' tuh dig ore like fury all by hisself.



While he hed th' pick over his head he looked at John's ol' mount'in gun, an' then I seed his arms shake an' he threw th' pick as fur as he could sen' it, an' cussin' like he wuz spittin' fire, he made fer his hoss, an' wuz as fast as any on 'em gettin' out o' gunshot."

Keith listened to the mountaineer as he went on with his story, and when he had finished, asked, "What is to be done, if the manager gets more men and comes back to-morrow, as he is likely to do, and forces matters?"

"Jest whut happened to-day, only more so. Nex' time John 'll begin to shoot afore he says anythin' tuh 'em an' afore they git time tuh git off thur hosses. John's a-goin' to keep all that's his'n; he tol' me tuh tell you that ef ye ast me."

"As he has a survey and claims possession, which is called 'nine points of the law,' he may get the Sheriff of the county to go with him under some pretence or other. What will happen then?"

"Th' Sheriff's kin tuh John, an' I'll tell Yaller Jacket, he hed better look whar he's a-goin' 'fore he jumps in th' dark o' th' moon in these parts, fer ef he don't he'll think it's a long way tuh th' groun' 'fore he hits it 'ith his feet. Then John hain't goin' tuh stop fer a Sheriff, long as he knows he's got th' right on it. John's help may cum o' these heyeh laws in Kentucky, an' he's said a good many times that no law's good when rascals use 'em tuh take whut hones' men's got by whut's right."

"Will you resist the State Guard if it is called out by

the Governor? You know we must obey the powers that be and keep the peace."

"That 'll make no diffe'ence 'less th' Jedge at Cedarville gives 'em th' right papers arter he hez heard th' case an' giv John his chance tuh hev his say. They air robbers now an' 'll be robbers till it air settled in a right way that John and his dad an' grandad nuver hed no right tuh that thar lan'. Till that's done, it's John's, an' we're a-goin' tuh stan' 'ith him till th' las' horn blows. We bin in this country too long tuh be run out by anyone whut cums along an' thinks he kin take whut's our'n an' whut's bin our fathers'. We air goin' tuh fight fer our own till death."

"You certainly talk in accord with the true meaning of the law of the land and show that it is largely written on the heart of an honest man, but we must sometimes, to avoid a greater wrong, submit to injustice for a time."

"Yes, that's whut some o' our preachers bin a-tellin' us, an' we hez bin a-tryin' tuh do somethin' that way at times, but y'u axed me a fair question an' I hev gin y'u a square answer 'bout whut 'll happen ef Yaller Jacket tries tuh do whut y'u tol' me 'bout. I hain't no larned man, but y'u knows now an' y'u kin depend on whut I bin a-tellin' y'u."

While Pool was finishing these remarks, to his surprise Thompson came in.

"Tom, I found the field was clear and that there was

no use for me up there any longer and so I came on knowin' I'd find you here," he said to Pool.

"I thought y'u'd not stay long arter th' Yaller Jackets got off. No use plaguin' yerself arter sich as them. All on 'em, 'cept th' Boss, air afeered o' shootin'-irons an' air a-tryin' tuh make folks think they air mighty mad tuh hide th' joy they feels at gittin' back 'ith whole skins. Yaller Jacket's a robber an' 'll steal mos' anythin' worth havin', from a toothpick tuh a block o' houses, but he's a heap too good fer that pack o' cowards he hed 'ith him up in th' woods. I wonder he don't throw 'em off his stomick in hopes o' gittin' well o' some o' his meanness that's a-strikin' intuh his in'ards. Yes, he's th' bes' of th' lot, an' ef his conscience wuzn't troublin' him a liddle bit an' he hed some men 'ith him 'stead o' them thin's he hed to-day, he mought 'ith proper care grow inter a man ef ye gin him time 'nough. Look heyeh, John, this lawyer man y'u sent me tuh hez bin a-askin' me whut y'u're goin' tuh do 'bout them folks cumin' back to-morrow, an' sich," Pool went on and repeated in substance what Keith had asked him and what he had told him, when Thompson replied, "You've got it about right, Tom, and there's no use in my goin' over it again, but there'll be no goin' on to that land by that crowd. They've found out they can't take possession by scarin' anybody so as to get into law and they are not going back there even when they go a-huntin', if I know anything about men. I'm so sure of this that I'm ready to

pay Mr. Keith his fee and thank him besides for his services."

When Keith and the minister, Mr. Gordon, who had been together for some time in the lawyer's office, went in company to the hotel that evening, though there were many of the boomers on and near the porch, not one of them took the slightest notice of them when spoken to in the usual polite and cordial manner of these gentlemen. The clerk in the office, when he handed their mail to them, and even the waiters in the dining room, made them feel that the fiat had gone forth from the boss and his satellites that they were to be made to feel they were unwelcome at the hotel, which was the property of the boomer company and was run in its interests.

## XII

### A FISHING TRIP

**A** COUPLE of weary yet undaunted hearts dwelt in the breast of our minister and his friend. They had need of a fortitude which gave no heed to fear, as every day made them more sensible of the evil purpose of those who intended their downfall.

They encouraged each other in their many talks, which they now made more frequent and were mainly confined to their rooms, as care must be taken to speak of other matters than that which was uppermost in their minds, when at meals.

One of the lawyers with whom Keith had his office was a refuge, and refused with scorn a proposition which involved his turning Keith out of his office.

Mr. Gordon's little congregation suffered by a falling off in the number who attended upon his ministrations, and he was sure that a secret and determined effort was being made to keep persons from aiding him in his work.

One man—a merchant—told him that he had to quit the church or else lose much of his trade.

"Are there others like you?" Mr. Gordon asked him. "You can judge for yourself," was the reply.

It was not difficult to be depressed, but a cheerful manner and a bright face was shown to all persons. Tom Pool, whom Mr. Gordon met, spoke to him of the fine fishing in the mountains near where his kinsman, Harvey Turner, lived and so impressed him that he went to the office of Mr. Keith at once and persuaded him to agree to start with him the next Monday. Keith had some fine fishing tackle and one of his office mates had some poles which he was glad to loan them. Pool came in to see them start, and to give them directions such as would enable them to find the way and cheered them with his statements of how abundant the fish were and of how glad his friend would be to see them. It was bright and early when they got off on horseback. The saddle is none too comfortable for a man unaccustomed to it and only the great beauty of the mountain scenery kept our friends from much discomfort.

A man who has never had the experience, can form no idea of the sensation of being within a forest, tracing his way along a dim and at times invisible path, knowing himself to be miles from a human habitation and uncertain of when he will find his way out and gain shelter and refreshment.

Our travellers had slower horses than they bargained for, and the trail over which they went was broken by stones in many places, so that the poor beasts could not proceed with a speed at all encouraging.

As evening drew near, the cabin was reached, where

Pool's kinsman lived, but when they asked if they could remain for the night, they were told by the man at the door that there was sickness in the family. Moreover, he added as "there was but one room besides that they cooked and lived in, and much as he disliked to say it, he could not keep them. The mountaineer, however, told them to "Keep right down me spring branch, 'til it runs intuh a nigger branch, an' then keep on down that branch 'til it runs tuh a crick, an' then go down that crick 'til y'u cum tuh some bars on th' left han'. Go through 'em an' ride up th' path an' y'u'll see a two-pen cabin, a leetle way up th' slope. Ride right up, an' tell 'em Uncle Harve sent y'u thar tuh stay all night, an' I think y'u'll git th' bes' they's got an' be welcome. Whut's y'u doin' in this country, I'd like tuh know?" he then asked.

"Oh, we want to get some of the fish we've heard so much about in Yellowboro."

"Wall, wall! I'm proud tuh see ye, an' more 'an that, ef my sick darter hain't no worse, I'll be down tuh see ye betimes in th' mornin' an' fish a leetle 'ith ye meself."

In the uncertain light the way down the branch was a rough one. The horses were tired, and after they had slipped a time or two on the smooth stones, covered with moss, it was not possible to get them to go on. At this, Mr. Gordon dismounted, and, taking his horse by the bridle-rein, led the way. As it grew very dark soon, he had to give up what path there was—if there was any—and grope for the water as his guide.

Keith, in the dilemma, gave his voice for abandoning the quest for lodgings, and contended that, tired and hungry as they were, it would be better to lie down on the mountain side, cover themselves with the saddle blankets, and wait for the morning.

"No, sir!" replied Mr. Gordon, with emphasis. "I came up here to go fishing in the morning, and I am not to be stopped if I have to crawl on my hands and knees to find the way."

He had scarcely spoken, when down he went with a great splash, not to his knees, but flat upon his face, full into the water of the branch. His companion could not tell whether it was horse or man or both that had fallen, nor whether it was over a bluff or precipice they had gone.

"Oh, Gordon! are you hurt? where are you?" Keith cried with all the voice he had left in him.

"I am right here in the water and moss," Gordon answered, "and not much hurt, I guess; but it's quite a sensation to start down a mountain in this way, with a horse attachment. Let's tie the horses and go on foot. I want to go down this mountain by degrees, and not all at once in a heap."

There was some debate between the men about the wisest course to pursue, and they were just about concluding to leave the horses, when they heard something coming with a rush down the higher part of the mountain above them.



"Listen! What's that coming so fast right upon us? Perhaps it's a panther, or a robber, or many of them," Gordon exclaimed.

"Get on the side of your horses, away from it, and we will soon learn our fate," Keith replied.

With bounds, apparently impossible for a man to take, and with a speed seemingly reckless, whatever it was, it came on as if full of fury and bent on destruction. When so close that Keith, who was nearest, expected to feel a blow, or be borne down by the spring of his assailant, a voice out of the darkness came in kindly tones, crying:

"Can't fin' y'r way an' plumb lost, air ye? Wall, ye air good at hollerin', even fer th' mount'ins. 'Spec' everybody in this neck o' woods done out o' the'r cabins a-lookin' out fer whut's cumin'. Ef y'u don't believe in shoutin' it's not b'cause ye can't make noise enough. Is that un that hed that fall hurt?"

"Not much, thank you," Mr. Gordon answered out of the gloom. "Only I am not looking for more of the same sort. My hands are a little cut on the rocks and my clothes are wet, and I should say muddy, if I didn't know there was no mud here. I suppose they are mossy."

"Let me git thar," the man said. "I heared y'u as I were standin' in th' door listenin'. It's only a leetle step tuh me cabin th' way ye hearn me come, an' I'm heyeh tuh lead y'u out. Wish I'd cum at fust. Gi' me that hoss an' ye jest keep close an' foller me. This heyeh path's as

plain tuh me as me front yard, as I've bin goin' over it all me life."

Uncle Harve, for it was he, took the minister's horse by the bridle, the other horse following him, and in a short time the larger branch was reached.

As a greater number of the mountaineers used this path, it was wider and better worn, and there was less difficulty in following it. Finally, they came to the creek, where there was a kind of wagon road, along which they proceeded with some ease.

When the bars were found, Uncle Harve put them down, and said, "Go right up through this lot an' y'u'll see a light arter a while, an' make fer it, an' when they knows I sent ye, they'll take ye in an' keep ye. I'll see ye agin."

"I wonder where that light is, and when we shall see it," Mr. Gordon observed, as, blundering on, he strained his eyes in the darkness. "I suppose some good spirit of the mountains will come to me if I fall into the tops of the trees somewhere, and hang there for the eagles to feed on. I hear the dogs barking, don't you, Keith?"

"Yes, and there are plenty of them, too; several to each man of us, I guess, from the sound of them. I think I'll mount my horse and let them get a taste of 'hoss' meat before they try man-meat. They are hounds, I judge, from their bay. They may be blood-hounds for aught I know, for I have been told there are many of them in these mountains."

Both now mounted as a protection from the dogs and rode on. The dogs had stopped at the fence, and were standing, eight or ten of them, with their front feet upon the top rail, ready to spring over the fence and rush upon the trespassers at a word from their master.

Mr. Gordon, upon getting near enough to the house, from which a flickering, uncertain light issued, cried, "Halloo, the house," and a sharp, clear woman's voice replied, "Whut y'u want, an' who air ye?"

"I want to stay all night," said Mr. Gordon.

"I'm a poor widow woman, an' don't take in strangers. Hardly got 'nough fer me poor child'en."

"We do not know where else to go, and we are tired and hungry, and one of us is hurt from a fall."

"Can't help that. Ye mus' git away, ur it 'll be worse fer ye, mighty quick."

Having said this, she made as if to shut the door and leave them to the dogs, who, having been quieted for a time by command of their mistress, now became more furious than ever. If they could have seen the Winchester rifles ready for immediate action in the hands of the boys within, they would have seen the necessity for prompt movement.

Mr. Gordon, not knowing his danger, hallooed again, before the door was fully closed saying:

"Uncle Harve sent us here, and said you would take us in for the night."

While from the uproar made by the dogs the woman

could not understand all Mr. Gordon said, she turned, and, facing the front, cried:

"Whut's that ye say 'bout Uncle Harve?"

"He could not take us because he said his daughter was sick, and he sent us to you, and told us to tell you so. He brought us to the bars and told us he would be here early in the morning, if he could leave his daughter."

"Bless my soul an' body! Why didn't ye tell that at fust? Light an' cum in—y'u, Rover, be quiet! All of ye cum away.

"Heyeh, boys, ye go an' take th' hosses an' bring 'em in."

Such a change is rarely ever seen in this world as had taken place when the good housewife found out that Uncle Harve had sent these men, and that she could keep them without fear.

The boys put their guns in their racks, went out and drove the dogs back, and took the tired beasts from the men, telling them to go into the house while they cared for the horses. This they did by taking off the saddles and bridles, and tying them to stakes with the halters already on them. Fodder was put before them, together with eight ears of small white corn. As the horses could sleep standing on their feet, or lie down on the ground, this was considered ample provision for them.

When the tired men entered the house they found Ruth Finley—for they were at the house of Pete Finley—

already working among the iron things on or near the broad and deep hearth.

While the girl was making up the corn-dodger dough from the sweet, white mountain corn, ground in an old-fashioned "over-shot mill," and were frying the fat "middling" of bacon, Mrs. Finley had laid aside her pipe and tobacco, the odour of whose impregnating power was ingrained in every splinter of the house, and was setting the table with some cream-coloured china—as she called it—which some day, far back in the past, had been white.

The boys, meantime, had been to the spring-house, and returned with the night's milk, which had had time to cool since Sukey and Baldface had given it into the pail in response to the stroking of the hands of "Sis."

All things being ready, Mrs. Finley said, "Set up an' make a beginnin'."

The minister did not know whether this meant to begin eating or to ask a blessing, but concluded he would ask a blessing, which he proceeded to do, after the way of offering a prayer instead of giving thanks.

Seeing that prayer was being offered, the Finleys knelt down. When Mr. Gordon had said "amen," he was as much astonished as were the Finleys.

Ruth, wild thing, and full of life as she was, "could not, however, keep her face straight," as she said after it was all over, and laughed, as the girls say down in the country, "fit to kill herself."

Mr. Keith caught the contagion from Ruth's eyes, and had a hard time to chew his mixture of corn-bread and fat bacon, even with the aid of fresh milk.

"Sis, behave y'uself an' mind y'r manners," the mother said, with a note in her voice which, nevertheless, showed a sympathy for Sis which had come from Eve's first daughter, whose name being lost, it cannot be given to many of the laughing girls who now abound upon the earth, even to the fastnesses of the mountains.

Mrs. Finley, when asked, consented to having prayers before going to bed without an eating accompaniment, but could not produce a Bible, as such a thing had never been in the house. Therefore one was brought from Mr. Gordon's saddle-bags.

Prayer over, to the great relief of the smallest boy, who asked his brother, when upon their knees, "Bud, I say, Bud, air we goin' tuh sleep this-a-way all night?" Mrs. Finley pointed to the ladder in the corner of the room, and said, "Go up that, an' ye'll fin' y'r bed up thar."

Climbing this rickety ladder they found themselves in a loft floored with loose boards, that moved and creaked when they walked over them, and a roof of planks, warped by the sun until they turned up at the lower end, and being without nails and held in place against the wind by the stones laid upon them, they left spaces for the delightful study of astronomy.

The bed was a scaffold, on which a feather bed had been placed over some loose, ordinary straw, and, from its

size and odour, was from "Old Virginia," and antedated Washington and the Revolution in its birth. It was, as they afterwards learned, an ancestral possession and heirloom in Mrs. Finley's family.

There were three tiers of sleepers at the cabin that night: the dogs under the house, the family on the main floor, and the travellers in the loft. All slept well except the dogs, for under the unusual responsibility of having strangers to care for and watch over the house, not to speak of their usual enemies, running all over them and drawing a living from their blood, they were so much disturbed as at times to make the night dismal by their unearthly howls.

### XIII

#### FISHING IN EARNEST

**T**HE early cock-crowing awakened Keith, and turning over rather hastily, he drove his elbow into Mr. Gordon's side with such force as made him, for a moment, imagine that he was impaled upon an inquisitor's spike.

Both heard such sounds as convinced them that the family below were up and at their morning duties. The dogs became quiet, but the calves and ducks and geese took up the work of noise-making, which so aroused them that they hastily dressed and came down the ladder to see and hear what made the early morning so delightful in the mountains.

First they went to the spring to wash their faces and hands in water clear as crystal, and so soft and sweet that Mr. Gordon said "he could drink it and never get enough."

As described by Bub Finley, what they did next was wonderful. "They jest took outen thur pockets—th' side ones on thur coats—a long narrow thing, which looked a leetle like a brush at th' big end, an' then they scooped up some water in thur han's an' put that air thing I'm



tellin' y'u 'bout in thur mouths 'ith th' water, an' then they scrubbed an' scrubbed an' spluttered an' spit like all fury. An' then they took th' thing an' washed it all out by splashing it in th' water below th' spring, an' then they beat it on thur han's tuh git th' water outen it, an' put it back in thur pockets. I jest naturally reckon that they hez somethin' mighty bad th' matter 'ith they mouths, ur they mus' be uncommon dirty an' not like ourn."

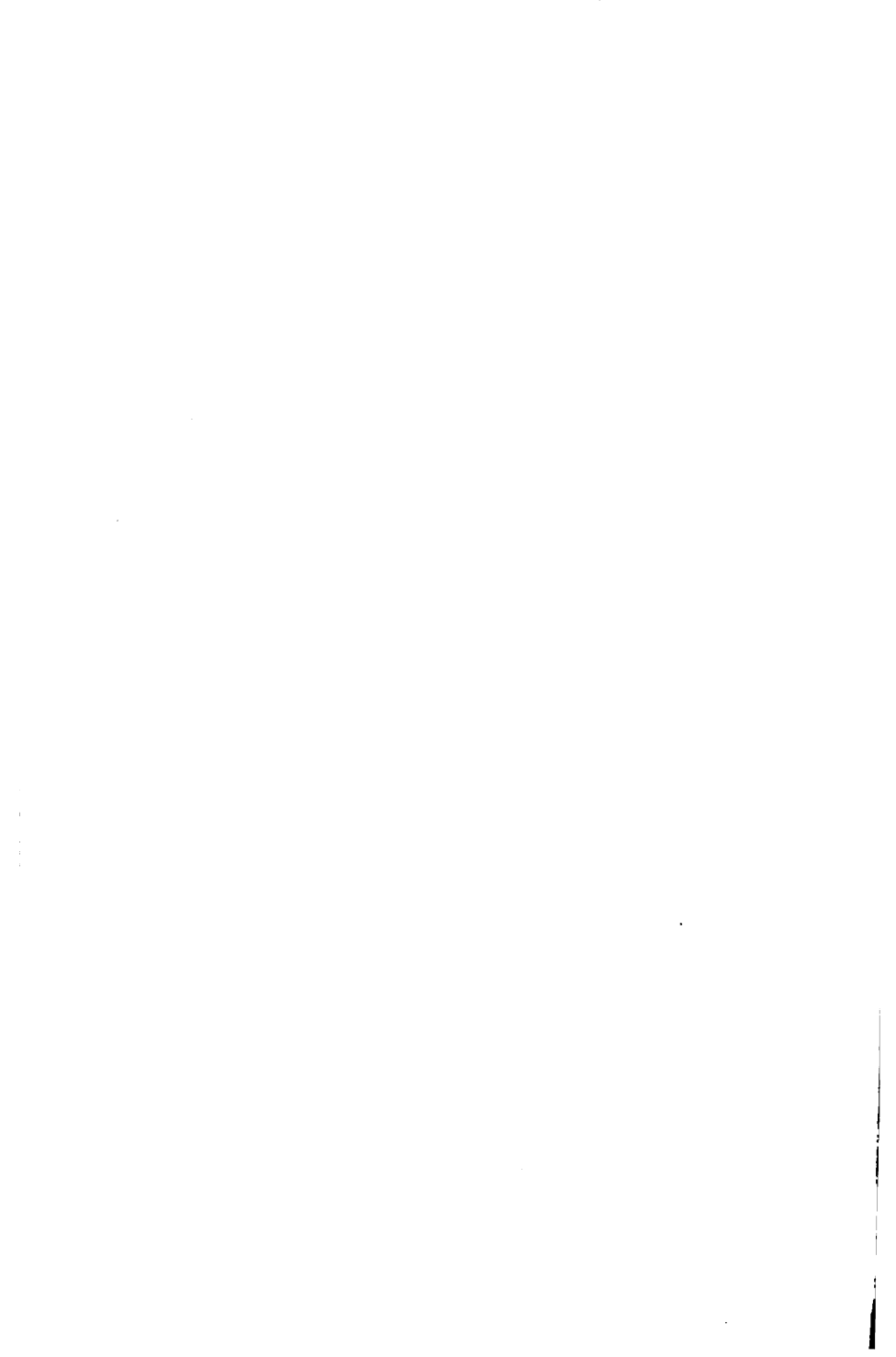
After the ablutions, as they were returning to the house, the sight of Ruth milking the cows, and of Bub holding the calves after he had let them through the slip gap, was very novel to both the town visitors. As the night's milk had been used for supper, this was at once put in the spring-house, after it had been strained, to get the animal heat out of it for breakfast.

Ruth had attracted Mr. Keith's attention the night before, but when he saw her, after milking two cows, place the pail of milk upon her head, and walk to the spring with an elastic swinging step, the personification of grace in every motion, he remarked to Mr. Gordon, "She is the most magnificent creature of the woman kind I have ever seen. What a pity it is that she cannot be educated!"

The girl was five feet eight inches in height, but her figure was so perfect she did not appear so tall. Her head sat upon a neck which was as well-rounded as a marble column, and had a poise of blended beauty,



**“HE SAW HER PLACE THE PAIL OF MILK UPON  
HER HEAD AND WALK TO THE SPRING”**



strength, and grace. Her hair was that rarely seen chestnut-brown color, and her eyes would have been lovely, either for their deep hazel colour, or for their expression, which betokened purity of thought and a soul fitted for both constancy and affection.

Her pliant form had been permitted to develop under the hands of the great Artist of the universe. No constricting bands or stays had warped it to conform with fashion. Her mother had not learned in the school where cruelty gains its satisfaction in more deadly ways than foot-binding, but had permitted the girl's fine form to bloom into the flower which best showed the will of Him who had given her life, and sent her forth to be beautiful.

The sound of her voice was musical in laugh or talk, in calling the chickens or the cows, or when she softly sang the plaintive melodies of the old-fashioned tunes that she learned at the meeting-house. It was no wonder that a man who had never seen such a wonder of grace and beauty was impressed by this princess of nature.

Before the house was reached, as the young men were returning from the spring, following in the wake of Ruth, upon whom Keith's eyes were fixed in despair of ever seeing anyone carry herself as she did, they heard the cheerful, triumphant tones of Uncle Harve, speaking to the dogs:

"Oh, ye needn't cum jumpin' an' whinin' 'roun' me. I hain't goin' arter deer ur coons tuh-day. I'm arter whut swims in th' water. .

"Hallo, young men," he cried, as he saw Keith and his companion approaching.

"Up 'arly, y'u air. Mount'ins no place fer 'lay-a-beds.' It takes a mighty long day heyeh tuh git in all th' good lyin' 'roun' loose. Hed y'r break-fas' ? Wall, I tho't I'd beat ye by a long shot. While ye fill up fer th' day, I'll ketch th' bait an' git ready fer bizness. Got plenty o' tackle, ye say.

"Lemme see it."

Mr. Keith went into the house and got his sea-grass lines, with their reels and corks, and handed them to Uncle Harve, who stood looking at them, and fingering them all the time with a curious expression on his face.

"How many feet in this line?" he asked, as he held up one of them.

"Three hundred," Mr. Keith answered.

"Goin' tuh fish in th' clouds? 'Spect y'u'll be a-climbin' th' trees undoin' y'r hook ef y'u go it on that pattern. And them red an' yaller things'll run all th' fish outen th' crick the minit they sees 'em. Wall, ef it's fish ye air arter, ye'll hev tuh try somethin' that 'll do fer these parts. I s'pose down whar ye cum from, whar th' water's deep an' th' river's wide, y'u mought make out tuh do a leetle 'ith them sort o' thin's, but up heyeh ye'll only be throwin' away y'r time tuh try 'em."

All the time he was talking he was producing, either from his trouser pockets, or from the chimney corner of

the house, lines about twenty feet long, and hooks with such sinkers as he had tried through many years.

"Cum heyeh, Bub, an' see whut I've got 'fore they's put out o' sight. Ye nuver seen such thin's afore, an' mought nuver agin, 'less ye runs away from home."

Bub came, handled, and gazed at Mr. Keith's tackle without saying anything, save with his eyes, which gave out a mingled expression of amusement and wonder.

"Y'u'd better not wet them things, as that 'll make 'em heavy tuh tote. I've got whut y'u wants. I'll take th' seine an' find y'u some bait by th' time y'u git breakfas'. My ole 'oman says I nuver yit fished 'ith a preacher, an' as th' ol' Elder's all th' time preachin' 'bout Jesus, an' th' 'postles bein' fishermen, by this time preachers must be th' bigges' fishermen in all the worl'. She wants me tuh go 'ith y'u an' larn somethin', an' she said, 'Harve, I reckon y'u won't be troubled 'ith no moonshine when y'u air 'ith a preacher, an' won't larn any new cuss words from 'em, nuther.' My Lordy! Ef she'd air seen them things y'u've fotched 'long, she'd gin it all up an' knowed ye hadn't even rubbed y'uselves agin' a fisherman."

Breakfast over, Mr. Gordon asked Mrs. Finley how much he owed her for the entertainment she had given them. The stooping figure of the woman came up straight as an arrow instantly, and firmly, and with pride, she said: "I don't take pay fer takin' in people lost in th' dark. I ain't got much o' anythin', but whut's heyeh's yourn."

"But," insisted Mr. Gordon, "we have no claim upon you, madam, and your kindness saved us from passing a disagreeable night in the woods, without shelter or food for our horses or ourselves. Money cannot pay you, I admit, but we owe it to our self-respect and sense of justice to pay you something."

He put in her hand ten shining half-dollar coins.

She looked at them with greedy eyes, mentally counted them, and felt how much they would do for her when she made her next journey to the little store over Black Mountain, with a handful of farm produce for barter.

For a moment, it seemed as if the demon of covetousness, seizing her necessities and those of her children as his plea, would conquer, but only for a moment, the indomitable spirit of the mountaineer was victor the instant she came back in thought to the traditions of her people as to hospitality, and saw the image of Peter Finley, in his grave only a year, standing upon his native heath, gladly giving his all, if need be, to those who claimed his help. She handed back the money with a manner which made it impossible for Mr. Gordon to say more, saying:

"Y'u'd better leave y'r critters heyeh an' walk down th' crick, as they won't be no use when y'u air fishin'. Y'u'll not be more 'an a mile from heyeh all day. Y'u kin cum back fer tuh-night, an' I'll sen' Sis an' Bub 'ith y'r dinners at twelve o'clock."

"Of all the pride I ever saw displayed, this beats it," Mr. Gordon observed, when he had a private moment with

Keith. "We'll have to find some way to pay these people. It will not do to accept their offer, for, if we decline, we'll have to reckon with Uncle Harve and have everything spoiled."

The fishermen found Uncle Harve at the bars waiting for them, with plenty of bait. He had minnows, hellgrammites, and grasshoppers. He saluted them with "In a few steps from heyeh thar's good fishin'. Heyeh's a pole fer each o' y'u. Be slow an' min' y'r capers, an' don't scar' th' fish so's they'll run under th' rocks, an' we'll soon git a fine string."

The fishermen from foreign parts, when they looked at the tackle and felt the poles, had a sinking of heart, and then and there gave up hope of ever catching a fish.

The creek was small and the water low. At many places it was easy to step across it, while at others, as it rippled over the rocks, singing a song of such music as blended with the arias of the mountain birds, who, with ecstasies, gave gladness forth to the air to be in tune with the trees and waters.

The holes where the water swirled under banks, covered with mosses and protected from crumbling by the roots of the trees, were first sought by the fishermen, as Uncle Harve directed.

"There hain't no room to play 'em. Y'u jest give 'em time tuh swallow th' bait and then jerk 'em out."

The minister got the first bite, and, in his eagerness, "jest jerked 'em out," and was chagrined to see his catch



hanging in a tree about twelve feet above his head. It was too far up to reach and too firmly fastened in the tree to be pulled away.

"Nothin' fer it but tuh climb, I reckon," Uncle Harve said, with a sly wink. "That's th' way leetle boys do when they's larnin' tuh fish."

Fortunately, it was a leaning tree, and Mr. Gordon, after some effort, was able to climb far enough to reach his fish and bring him down.

"'Pon my life, I nuver seed such luck as we air havin'. Nothin' but sun-fish, an' they not good uns. Thar's plenty in them holes, an' why they won't bite's too much fer me, 'less they's afeered o' preachers. Ef y'u don't git some fish 'fore long, I'll hev to go in grabbin' an' pull 'em out from under th' roots an' rocks 'ith my han's."

Keith hooked a fine green bass, and got him into his hands, but as this was the first one he had ever seen, and he was so pleased with its rare beauty, that while admiring it and showing it to his comrades, the fish flounced and slipped from his grasp into the water, and in a moment was out of sight under the bank.

"Jump in arter him—water hain't deep," Uncle Harve cried. "Maybe y'u'll know better arter y'u see a few more on 'em."

Down the creek the fishermen slowly made their way, and though it grew larger by receiving several branches, or little creeks, and looked more promising for fish, their "luck was poor."

It was within a few minutes of twelve when a boy's whistle was heard above them on the mountain slope, and Uncle Harve gave a shrill reply, which said: "Here we are, come on!" in every cadence it sent forth. Bub parted the laurel bushes and appeared with a cedar pail in his hands, followed by Ruth with a split basket upon her head. Babe also came out of the bushes a moment later.

"Whar's y'r fire an' fish, Uncle Harve?" the girl asked at once.

"Hain't got 'nuff fish tuh build a fire fer," was the reply, which showed that the old man, if not out of humour, was depressed in spirits.

"Uncle Harve, y'u jest make a fire on them air rocks, an' Bub 'll have plenty o' fish in a minit. Bub, git under that bank an' throw 'em out," Sis said, as she sat down her basket, and prepared to begin work.

Bub rolled up his pants and shirt sleeves and walked boldly into the water, which was about two feet in depth, and, putting his hands under the roots and rocks, began to throw out green bass which weighed about a pound and a half, until a dozen of the beauties were flopping upon the rocky shore.

"That 'll do, Bub," Uncle Harve cried, from his seat on a rock, where he had taken the first fish Bub caught and was cleaning it. "Y'u men fotch some dry sticks an' we'll soon hev whut 'll make y'u'r 'mouths water.'"

With flint and steel a fire was quickly started among

the dry sticks, and, as soon as "live coals" could be had, Ruth, with Babe's help, was broiling the fish and placing them upon a plate. Corn-bread and side bacon, with the addition of a few eggs and the broiled fish, to the hungry fishermen, was the best meal they had ever tasted.

Ruth had no profusion of table linen with which to ornament the "table spread in the wilderness," but she made at least one of those present forget all loss from such causes by the influence of her presence.

When the feast was over, and Ruth was gathering up her things preparatory to returning to the house, Keith made some attempt to be polite to her, which, by feminine instinct she felt, showed his admiration. Never having received attention from anyone of the other sex who had reached manhood, she was so startled, if not alarmed, that the lawyer soon saw that he would have to admire her from a distance.

There was some little luck in the afternoon for all the fishermen, and Uncle Harve was very successful, catching a fine string, which he declared was enough for both families.

As they were going to the house, Mr. Gordon said, "I wonder, Keith, if we cannot get Mrs. Finley to send her younger daughter to our school at Smith's Court-House? Two or three years there would make a great difference in her, and I have money from a friend in New York City, which he wishes to have used for some such purpose."

"I don't think you could, unless you can get the girl herself so anxious to go as to use her power over the affections of the mother to induce her to consent to it. Mrs. Finley assuredly cannot afford it herself; if she could she would, I am sure, if she thought it best for her child. You had a sample of her pride this morning, and, after your signal defeat then, I suppose you are not eager to try it again."

"I am going to have a talk with the girl, anyhow," Mr. Gordon replied, "and start her to thinking, and I can come this way again when going to the Court-House, as I must see the school there soon. It will be interesting to watch the effect of my experiment."

When Uncle Harve had divided the fish and was about to go home, he said, "Glad ye cum, hope tuh see ye some day agin. Preachers air good company, even 'ithout 'moonshine' an' sich."

"Did you ever see Yellowboro, Uncle Harve?" Keith asked.

"No, I niver seed no such place, but I hearn tell on it. Tom Pool tol' me a heap 'bout it when he was heyeh. Some time nex' winter I 'spec's tuh see it, ef whut I hearn is so. I kinder think some men air there whut I wants tuh see an' speak tuh."

"Well," Mr. Keith answered, "come to my office when you get to town and I will take you round, and do my utmost to give you a good time by showing you everything in the city."

"Wall, I'll find y'u when I cums. Two ur three on us may cum in a wagon 'round t'other side o' th' moun-t'ins, an' up th' crick frum th' Oakville way."

Mr. Gordon had a talk with Ruth, but got very little response to his plans. He only saw that she was interested in what he was saying. If he had known the nature of the mountaineer he would have seen that he had started her thinking. When people of such tenacious natures think, something is more than likely to come of it.

All the members of the family of Finley came forward and shook hands cordially with the strangers when they went away the next morning, except Ruth, who was not around when they left, much to the regret of Mr. Gordon, but particularly of Keith. Ruth saw them, however, not only when they left the house, but when they turned up the creek at the bottom of the ravine and took the road toward Yellowboro.

As she looked out from the laurel bushes, Ruth's eyes showed that she had been awakened, and had put on strength for a battle with herself, with her mother, and with the untoward circumstances of her forlorn condition. This afterwards was to prove the power of a will to triumph over obstacles that the world deems almost insuperable, and do a work which can and will repeat its influence, when the victories of earth's proudest conquerors have been forgotten.

## XIV

### AN ELECTION

**T**HE outing of our friends was the means of taking their thoughts from the persecutions of their enemies in Yellowboro. Hope and faith had fed upon the new visions and had been stimulated to fresh activities by what the mountains told them.

The fury of their persecutors began to react against the manager's party. Mr. Gordon noticed on a few Sabbaths, strange men—some without coats, and with the outline of pistols showing through their clothing—in church. They came after service had begun, and were quick to leave when it was over; but they showed an interest in everything, which was as pathetic as it was encouraging.

As more and more of them came, the preacher was made to see that he was regarded as their friend, and that they had undertaken to see that he was unharmed and cared for. Nor was this all that happened, for, when some of the weak and vacillating found that the "natives" had chosen to go to this church, they themselves returned, and began to talk about "our" church and what

"our" preacher was doing for the people of the mountains.

Men now rushed up to Mr. Gordon, with great effusion, and asked after his health, who had passed him without as much as a nod when meeting him on the street a few weeks before.

The robbed and cheated, who had not money enough left to get away from the town, came to him for friendship and counsel, and all who had felt the iron hand of cupidity and persecution, saw in him a man who, if he could not give them the aid they needed, yet would not betray and leave them to the fury of those who had wronged them.

Keith also felt the force of the reaction, in the coming to him of those who had been cheated by false representations, and by the rapacity of the horde of hangers-on of the Land Company. Most of the lawyers were either in the employ of this company, or under so many obligations to it for "pickings," that they either would not, or feared to, take a case against it.

Mr. Keith had acquired the reputation of being a lawyer who was not afraid of the "gang," and whom the "gang" was trying to run out of business, and this brought to him all the elements now opposed to such high-handed and unjust doings.

He was really a lawyer of ability, and quite able to effectually present his client's cause. It soon began to be seen that a mistake had been made in attempting his

intimidation, and that many of the crooked dealings of the company were in danger of being brought to light and shown up.

What actually brought most confusion into the ranks of the "gang" was that, in their haste and greediness, they had not looked up the titles of much of the land they had paid for, as they should have done; and, as Keith soon found this out, and intended to protect his clients, they were at their wits' end for some way of escape from their doom.

How the "natives" found out everything that was going on in all parts of the town and were in constant readiness to meet every case of misrule and wrong-doing, has not been known unto this day. It was certain, however, that what was done in secret was soon known in the coves and on the mountain sides, and that hearts that knew no fear had at their service hands which had all skill to circumvent those who maligned and made sport of the mountaineer and his ways.

The manager and his party found it necessary to have one of their creatures put in the sheriff's office of the county, that he might manipulate the drawing of jurors and do their bidding in crooked ways. They were sure that they could control the ensuing election, and so confident of the success of their plans to count these men in, that, when Thompson announced himself as a candidate for the office, they laughed in derision at his foolishness in thinking he could be elected. They admitted that he



would carry the county in the precincts outside of the city, as the people were largely of the political party to which he belonged; but, in the town, where the balance of power was, they intended to cast enough votes to make sure of the election of their tool, and count him in without regard either to law or to honesty.

When the polls opened upon election day, it was seen that only those who were against Thompson were to be allowed to vote. A great crowd had gathered and was standing in the street long before the time for the voting to begin, and as it was known that most of the persons in it were for Thompson, and had come early, so that they might vote and then go to their work, the election officers, who were in the ring to defeat him, determined not to open the polls for a time.

The crowd continued to grow until the streets were so blocked up as to stop all traffic, and, indeed, all passing.

The cry went up to "open the polls." Disregarded, it grew stronger and stronger, and, as whiskey had been freely given out and the people from the mountains, who voted in the town, were now coming in, the officers became so much alarmed that at last, two hours after time, they opened the polls and began to receive votes.

The plan they adopted was to have the sheriff, with his deputies, stand at the door of the room where they were holding the election, and by the ostentatious display of arms to force back all of Thompson's men as they ap-

peared, and to bring in the men who would vote against him, filling the room with them and then closing the door to allow them a protracted time to cast their votes. When these men had voted, they were to be put out by the back door, the front door was again opened, and another crowd admitted of similar character, and a like process was gone through. Thus they intended to take as much time as possible and be able to close the polls before any, or very few, of the Thompson supporters had voted.

Such a scheme might work in some places and in some countries, and among such populations as had bowed to the yoke, but in the mountains of Kentucky, and with such men as Thompson and his followers, it was an exhibition of folly which was too small even to be contemptible.

It was quickly made evident that the plan had to be abandoned, or the place would be deluged with blood and the manager and his party either slain or driven out of the county.

"Thompson, does y'u see whut them Hessians air up tuh doin'," Tom Pool exclaimed as he ran up to his leader. He had been pushed away from the door by a crowd of men and held in so close that he could not draw his pistols. His face was pale, but not a nerve in his body trembled, and his voice, without any outward excitement, had taken a pitch some notes higher than ordinary, which means to those who hear it that the time for parleying is past, and the moment of battle has come.

"Yes, Tom, I see it, and you and Bob can get the men together as soon as you can. It's to be death or a fair election, and that right off. If they think they can come into this county and take the right of votin' from us, they are mighty mistaken."

"I kinder thinks so myself. Hurrah fer Thompson!" was the reply, and he rushed hither and thither speaking to certain tall and thin men who were standing on the outskirts of the crowd. These men, without hurraing themselves, spoke to others of like appearance and sentiment until forty or more were gathered together on the side of the polling place.

It was a strange sight, Thompson seated upon the shoulders of two tall, strong men, and shouting: "All men who are for Thompson come this way!" It was repeated until the crowd thinned out in front of the house, and gathered on the vacant lot at the side of it, where the farce of an election was going on.

Two-thirds or more of the men assembled there went into this crowd, among them every negro present. These negroes, workers in the coal-mines around the city, were principally from the far South. They were of the political party of Thompson, and did not care what the other party said or did, so they had the right to vote.

It was not intended that these men should come near the polls. They were to be taught the lesson, right then and there, that they were not to presume to come to the polls as they did in Mississippi and Alabama.

This was reckoning without their host with a vengeance, in the mountains of Kentucky, as the friends of Thompson had either fought in the Federal army or were the sons of men who had; and it was their purpose that every negro should vote who was entitled to by the laws of the State.

If the manager and his party had been wise, all efforts to hold an election after their plan would now have been abandoned, but, as desperate men, they took desperate chances.

Thompson gathered his men, and told the negroes to form into as solid a mass as possible and come in behind the men from the mountains. "Keep close step and press against the man in front of you, and don't let anyone come between you and him. If I give the word, press harder and harder, so that you will become a part of a force which will be as that of one man. When I say "Stop," you must stop and stand straight. If there is any shootin' you must let me and my men do it. In no case must *you* fight—not in any way. We will do that, and if you see us fightin', you just stand in your places and see us clean out all these people."

It was done, and the mountaineers, to the number of a hundred or more, began to move with Thompson, a Colt's army revolver in each hand, still on the shoulders of two of his followers.

The men at the voting-place did not give way, but when the head of the column met them, the force was so

great that they were either pressed to one side or forced forward against the door.

Slowly and surely went on the sturdy mountain leader, while the cries, "Hurrah for Thompson!" drowned every other sound. How the negroes yelled! They took up the song, "John Brown's Body," and, with heads thrown back, sang it until the mountains rang with the sound.

The sheriff and his deputies, with guns cocked and aimed, ordered Thompson to disperse his followers and himself to go away under penalty of being shot at once.

"Tom, don't be a fool and get killed," Thompson said. "All we want's a fair election, and I give you the word of a Thompson that we'll let every legal vote be cast that's for you, but we are going to cast all of ours."

This was accompanied by the potent argument of a hundred aimed rifles.

The few mountaineers with the sheriff stood fast, but those behind them made such a noise falling over chairs and other things in their haste to get away, that the sheriff looked around to see if he was being charged from the rear, and seeing that those who had forced him into his present unpleasant and dangerous position, were either fleeing or fled, he lowered his weapons, growling:

"You cowards!

**"Thompson, you've earned your election."**

**The manager and his party talked much of contesting the majority that was rolled up for the mountaineer candidate and of throwing out the entire vote of the city, but nothing ever came of it but threats.**

## XV.

### THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

**T**HE desire to have a Sunday School outside of the town became so strong among a number of persons, that Mr. Gordon started one to be held in the afternoons. A wagon was hired to take out the teachers, and quite a large company of scholars came together every Sunday.

The school was a curiosity to the people, as none among them had ever seen one. The oldest scholar was a Baptist preacher, who had been preaching for almost forty years, and was approaching seventy years of age. He came to see what was being done, and was invited to sit with Mrs. Gordon's class, who had joined her husband some time before, and in the following weeks he became a regular attendant.

At first he listened with a look which was indescribable, later on he showed interest, and finally became so intent on learning that he was rarely absent from his seat. He would not ask or answer questions, but no student ever made his desire to learn more apparent.

"Uncle Henry, who'd 'a' thought y'u'd go tuh school

tuh a 'oman, an' her no Baptis'," said a friend to him one day.

"Wall, I wouldn't 'a' thought it myself. I didn't min' tuh, I jest took it intuh my head tuh see whut them air strangers were a-doin' on, an' so I sot thar fer a spell tuh fin' out. I hain't hearn her say nothin' agin' Baptis' teachin', an' I've watched like a hawk. She knows a heap sight more o' th' Bible than I does, an' kin fin' all th' places in a whipstich an' tell y'u whut David an' Dan'l an' Paul an' John says 'bout all them things whut we ought to know 'bout, an' she talks tuh ye as ef she hed th' Lord right with her an' a-tellin' her whut tuh say tuh ye.

"She's made me put on my studyin' cap an' read my book more tuh fin' out if she were a-tellin' th' truth, than I uver did in all my born days. I hain't cotch her nary time yit. I bin layin' out tuh ask her 'bout th' river Jurdan an' John th' Baptis' fer some time an' see ef I can't cotch her, but her do go on so beautiful an' seem so wrap' up in whut she am a-sayin', that I gits carried 'way so I jest can't do it, an' so puts it off 'til nex' time, an' nex' time hain't cum yit.

"Her an' th' preacher air cumin' tuh my house tuh see me, an' then I'll jest let 'em know a thing or two 'bout th' water an' John th' Baptis'."

"But y'u go an' sets an' larns from a 'oman an' y'r's bin tellin' us all y'ur life that th' 'oman hain't as good an' smart as th' man, an' she oughtn't tuh take off her sun-bonnet in meetin' nur hev nothin' tuh say," was the reply.



"Wall, I knows, I knows, an' yit it's jest this heyeh way. Ef th' fines' an' bes' pitcher y'u hez got jest sets on th' shelf an' nuver hev a drap o' milk in it frum year en' tuh year en', an' jest says tuh y'u, 'Look at me, I'm mighty purty,' an' th' poor common pitcher air al'ays full o' sweet, pure milk, must y'u say, 'I won't drink any o' th' milk ' jest because it air in th' common pitcher an' not in th' fine one'? I tells y'u, I'm goin' tuh drink th' milk jest whar I kin git it. It's good milk—' th' sincare milk o' th' Word'—an' I'm thrivin' on it," Uncle Harve replied.

"But whut 'll folks say when they hears it up tuh Salem Meetin'-House? Won't they thinks y'u're goin' tuh jine th' 'New Lights,' an' be mighty mad?" was the answer.

"Don't know, an', not givin' y'u a short answer, don't kere. She hain't tol' me nothin' but whut's in th' Book, an' when she does, I'm goin' tuh tell her so, an' jest git up an' go outen that place as fas' as I kin go. She don't preten' tuh be a preacher an' don't put on no airs, but's plain like an' asts only fer her Master tuh be heard an' trusted.

"Then do y'u see who she's got in that air class? Thar's Jim Hicks, who's killed three men whut we knows on, an' how many more th' Lord only knows, an's wanted fer murder in Tennessee an' Virginy both. Jest y'u watch him how his hungerin' eyes looks into hern when she tells him o' mercy in Jesus. An' thar's Tim Miles.

He's killed two men in this neck o' woods, an' now out o' jail on bail. An' Tom Simpson. He's killed one man, an' he's scarce outen his teens, an' this very summer he's bin a-layin' fer his own brother tuh put a bullet in his head ur his heart. An' that other man whut cums outen th' woods, every Sunday, we don't know nothin' 'bout, only he mus' be heyeh fer somethin' he's done not ordered in th' ten commandmen's. Now ef she kin git at them air men, which nobody else kin do, jest let her do it, 's my say."

"Whut good 's it do 'em, I'd like tuh know? They cums jest tuh hev some place tuh go," was the answer to this.

"Le' me tell ye, young man, that Tom Simpson tol' a gal he's sparkin' that he'd nuver hearn tell o' nothin' like whut she's bin sayin' tuh him, an' that he's changed his min' 'bout shootin' people an' he only wishes he'd hearn tell on it afore. He got this gal tuh git word sent tuh his brother tuh cum home, an' he'll not hurt him, but 'll live in peace with him as he's seen how bad he's bin, an' wants tuh begin a new life an' live differen'. Ef she nuver does nothin' more in all her born days, that's more 'an all th' preachers 'roun' heyeh hev ever done, an' I'm not goin' tuh put myself afore th' wheels o' Zion tuh stop 'em goin' 'round, I tell ye!"

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon undertook to visit some of the people who were not attending the Sunday School, and discovered strange things. The first visit was to "Captain "

Tipps, who had been the leader of one of the worst feuds which had desolated the region around Yellowboro. He had killed a number of men with his own hand, and had been the cause of the death of many more. He had been badly wounded several times, and lain out in the mountains like a wild beast, getting over his wounds without surgical attention. He was always guarded at home and abroad by at least one armed man, and day and night was on the watch himself.

Many efforts had been made to arrest him on warrants from Tennessee, and all had failed. Every tree had been cut away and all brush removed within rifle-range of his house, so that no man could get near enough to shoot him without being seen.

Mr. Gordon had been advised to keep away from him as there was always more or less danger in approaching such a man, who might be under the influence of "moonshine" whiskey, or mistake a stranger for someone with a warrant.

He would not be dissuaded by such advice and boldly went forward, on what he conceived to be the line of duty. When near enough to see through the open door the people moving in the two-roomed log-cabin, it was clear that the inmates were disturbed.

The minister and his wife came to the door, and, knocking, a gruff and surly voice said, "Come in!" On entering the room they found its furniture limited to two beds and a number of split-bottom chairs. The walls

were of unhewn logs, unjointed, and the spaces between them were filled with chips, held in place by red clay. There was no window, but there were three doors,—two opening upon the outside, and one into the next room—which was what the Scotch call a “lean-to.”

Two faded, tired-looking women and several children were in the room, and one of the women was holding in her arms a child, seemingly about three years of age, and evidently sick. Upon one of the beds lay a pair of pistols, within reach of a large surly-looking man, clothed only in two garments, whose attitude and appearance showed alertness and determination.

As Mr. Gordon took in the room with his quick glance, he saw through a space in the logs separating it from the “lean-to,” that he was covered by a rifle. If he had as much as stepped toward “Captain” Tipps, he would have been a dead man. He was not asked to be seated, and feeling the tension of the situation, more than seeing it, he said: “I am the new minister in Yellowboro, and we have a Sunday School over at Johnston’s place on Sunday afternoons. I have come to ask if you and your family will attend it.”

The captain had never been to a school in his life. His ideas about it were those he had gained from the outside of the log-cabin school-houses, which he passed on the mountain paths and into which he may have crept some stormy night for shelter, when hunted by enemies, or the officers of the law. To have a school of any kind in

Johnston's house, unless it was one to teach how best to find and kill one's foes he could not understand.

Johnston's house had been the principal fort for the opposite side in the feud of which he had been the leader, and the lead now in its walls showed how it had been attacked. Mr. Gordon did not know that at the time, or he would scarcely have thought of asking this outlaw chief to come to this place.

During the interview, the man in the other room, called by a sign from "Captain" Tipps, came in to see the visitors.

Mrs. Gordon had taken a seat by the mother and sick child, and was showing her interest by such feminine arts as women understand, and through which there is such a comity of joys and sorrows in all conditions of life.

The attention to his sick child touched this man, whose word was law to so many daring mountaineers, and who was so feared that when he walked the streets of the city men went into the back-rooms of their stores and closed the doors. His manner became gentle, and he even asked his guests to be seated, saying that he was ready to hear what they had to say to him about school.

So it came about that after spending a half-hour in the "lion's den," Mr. Gordon departed with the captain's promise to come to hear him preach, and to send his children to Sunday School.

The children were not, however, sent to the school, but one Sunday morning the captain himself, with a guard

all armed to the teeth, came into the church, to the amazement of all the congregation, and the alarm of many of them, and listened with apparent interest to all that was said.

Another place visited by Mr. and Mrs. Gordon was the cabin of John Robinson, a leader on the other side of the feud. Robinson and his "oman" were at home, and some children were also in the house. It was easy to see that visitors were not welcome, and that he intended to show it.

No doubt, he had watched the preacher and his wife and knew what cabin they had already visited, which was the last place on this earth from which to come, if anyone wanted to ask him for anything. He made Mr. Gordon see that he would not allow his children to go to the Sunday School, and that he would not go himself.

He had three, perhaps more, wives, and maintained his numerous families by giving each a cabin and a few acres of land. When he tired of one wife,—not that he was married to her,—he left her in her cabin, and took the children away to another, built for some new woman of whom he had possessed himself.

He had done this so many times, that there were several sets of children in the cabin where he was now living, though only one wife.

He cut wood and had it hauled for the discarded ones, but left them to themselves, except when another man came around. When this happened, he appeared on the

scene with his gun, and someone was shot, or the wife returned and kept to her loneliness.

Strange to relate, there was in that poor cabin a cheap organ, which some enterprising drummer had induced Robinson to buy on the instalment plan. Mrs. Gordon, attempting to add interest to the interview, spoke of it; being there amid such surroundings it filled her with wonder, and she asked how it got there, and if anyone in the cabin could play it. No one had been able to use it since the agent had left it; and Robinson, anxious to hear it again, asked Mrs. Gordon if she could play on the thing.

She never accustomed herself to play without notes, but, opening the organ, she endeavoured, as best she could, to play "Martyn" and other familiar tunes. Robinson and the children were entranced, and when Mrs. Gordon could not remember other tunes, he begged her to play the same ones over and over. His whole manner changed, and when his daughter, seeing her opportunity, told him that she wanted to go to the school, he promised her that she might.

"My dear," said Mr. Gordon on their way home, "I believe more than ever that music hath charms to soothe the savage breast."

## XVI

### A CHRISTMAS TREE

**W**HEN Christmas drew near, the workers in the little mountain Sunday School resolved to have a Christmas tree.

None of the scholars had ever seen one, and when it was mentioned, judging from the questions which they asked, it filled them with strong emotions. Some thought they were to go into the woods and do something to a tree which would have an effect in some hidden and mysterious way upon it and the country, and others believed they intended to charm them into their ways of thinking, by calling up spirits.

Uncle Henry at once drew away. He was fully convinced that it was of the Pope, of whom he had heard in some vague way, and whom he believed not only to be in the service of the devil, but able to draw people into the devil's-work. His ideas of the Pope and the devil were a mixture of "folk lore" and truth, both ludicrous and sad.

The house in which the school met, though occupied by an old negro woman, was in litigation, pending a settlement by the courts as to its proper owner. This old aunt



said, when asked for the use of the house, that she would let anybody have it who would "fit" the devil.

"I'se nuver seen nor hearn tell o' the kin' y'u is, but if you's a-wantin' to fit the devil, this is the place an' now's the time."

The old negro was much excited about the Christmas tree, as her young "missus" had read her, when she was a little girl, about one in the "old country." She was ready to get a dinner for the ladies who came to put up and prepare the tree, and, to be sure of having enough help, she got several women to come and work with her.

In few places would it be more easy to secure a tree for such a purpose than on that mountain side. One of the young lady teachers volunteered to select it, and ready and strong hands among the older male scholars were more than willing to aid her in cutting and taking it to the cabin.

The merchants of Yellowboro had no stock of ornaments for Christmas tree decorations, although having a goodly supply of fireworks for the season of "Peace on earth, good-will to men," and the ingenuity of the trimmers of the tree was taxed to find anything as suitable substitutes.

Popcorn and cranberries, with tarlatan, used in connection with silver paper, and a liberal addition of cotton batting, in the skilful hands of ladies from another portion of the State—made, however, quite a presentable tree,

when the presents of candy, which were put up in bags made of tarlatan, and the oranges were hung upon it.

Mrs. Gordon declared, when the work on the tree was all done, as she stood and looked it over, that she had never known the possibilities concealed in tarlatan and popcorn in her life until she now saw this tree in its complete glory.

The exercises had been fixed for half-past two o'clock, but by ten in the morning some of the young women were at the house. They made no offer to help in any way, and though reminded that the exercises were for the school, and would not begin for four hours, they ignored the hint; and making no reply, just sat and looked on at the preparing of the tree.

Mrs. Gordon, a close observer of "womenkind," could observe absolutely no change of expression on their faces. They sat and looked without sign of what was passing in their minds.

At the beginning of the exercises, Mr. Gordon tried to tell something of the origin and history of the custom of having a Christmas tree. In a simple way he described our fathers in the countries across the great ocean, and how they were led into the land when it was a wilderness, and how Christmas time reminded them of the country from which they had been led, and of the homes and churches they had left.

He told them of the coming of Jesus, and spoke of Him as a little babe, and of His mother and her hopes and

fears. He showed them that love to man was the cause of all this plan of God, and of its perfect fulfilment at Christmas time in the gift of Christ. The gift of Himself was the way He had of drawing us to Him, and of getting us to give ourselves to His service.

As they listened, there came to the faces of the older people—for the house was crowded by the fathers and mothers of the children—a look, first of surprise that they had come to a religious meeting, and then gleams of intelligence, showing that they had heard the simple story of the birth of Jesus in words which they could understand for the first time, and that they were moved by it to higher and nobler thoughts than had hitherto been the occupants of their minds.

Two of the stolid young women who had watched the preparing of the tree seemed unmoved by Mr. Gordon's remarks: but they gazed at the tree in such manner, that some who saw them could scarcely restrain their tears, as they saw through their great hungry eyes, like windows, hearts starved by lifelong repression and lack of kindness.

The teachers cut the bags of candy and oranges from the tree, and coming to them among the first, offered each the portion due, but they emphatically refused to take anything with a decision marked by such emphasis as to disconcert the donors.

After the small children had each received what was a treasure to them, and the visitors were also given a por-

tion, a lady went to these young women and told them "that it was always expected that all who attended the school should have these tokens of love and kindness from the teachers, and that their feelings would be hurt if they refused to take the presents."

"Nobody niver gin us nothin', an' why should y'u uns do it?" one of them asked.

"Because this is Christmas and we wish to give to you for the sake of Jesus, who was born at this time, and thus gave Himself for us," she replied.

"We'll pay y'u fer it, an' then we'll take it," was the reply.

"No, we do not even take a collection on this day. We give it to you freely, as Jesus gave Himself. You must take it as if it came from Him."

It was a hard struggle in the minds of these mountain girls. It was true that they had never been given anything by any one except their father, and very little by him. They were clothed in cheap calico dresses made by their own hands after patterns that had been in the family for generations, and wore sunbonnets of green gingham, with yellow spots—the bonnets being square in front and projecting four inches or more beyond their faces. To them, work, and the fruits of it, were the only rewards of life, and love, if felt, was to be hidden, and had no gifts to make its existence known.

After more persuasion, and some consultation, without the use of words however, they took the candy and

oranges. It was the first "store candy" they had ever had, and probably the first orange they had ever seen, unless in the windows of the Yellowboro stores.

But their happiness was not in all cases long-lived, for one of these girls was met by her father, who demanded to know if she had tasted the things. She had not, and he took them away from her and destroyed them, saying that he hoped to wipe out the disgrace she had brought upon his family by taking presents from "them folks without askin' him. He'd let 'em know that he could get all his gals needed, an' no thanks to 'em."

This man was a type. He was now rich, having sold a part of his property to the Yellowboro Company, but, holding on to some hundreds of acres immediately joining the city, which he was now selling off in building lots. Some of them brought him more than the whole tract of land could have been sold for before the days of the "boom." Yet he continued to live in his cabin, and was proud of his insignia of poverty. He did not know the use of money, and his haggard face and nervous manner gave proof that his happiness was about destroyed by the coming of his wealth.

A bank clerk once tried to confuse him in his accounts in the bank, and steal something from him. The mountaineer saw through this like a flash of light, and did not argue a moment, but demanded the full tale of his money on the instant, and when the smart young man, finding

himself caught, tried to "hem and haw" over the matter, hoping to confuse the "barbarian," as he called him, the mountaineer "pulled his gun" and did not put it up until the last dollar he had in the bank was in his pocket and he was out of it, and in the street on his way home.

The people sang from our well-known Moody and Sankey gospel hymns, but it was difficult to get the grown people and the larger children to sing from a book. It was a rare thing to see a book of hymns or songs in the mountains at any of their meetings, except the one brought by the "rider," as they named the Methodist preacher. The Baptists "lined out" their hymns from memory, and sang them a line at a time, if the sounds could be called singing. A book with the notes was a strange thing and was looked upon with suspicion. Then they could not understand the choruses, and would not sing. The little children, though, caught the songs quickly, and made them ring out in the school and afterwards at home, so that the native love for music, dormant in the parents for so long, was given life and exercise, and slowly singing became a part of the worship enjoyed by them with all their hearts.

The few Christmas songs in the book did full duty that day, and the memory of them was a delight.

Uncle Henry, when his grandchildren brought home their gifts and told him, not with the glad faces and accents of joy of our little ones, but in the self-contained way which even the children of mountain people ever

maintained, of what had happened and how much they enjoyed it all, said in solemn tones, as he shook his hoary head many times in his pulpit manner:—

“It do beat all I uver hearn tell on, an’ I jest do wonder whut’s goin’ tuh happen nex’. Steam cyars an’ sich, an’ cyars that runs ’ithout steam, by whut no man kin fin’ out, but th’ devil a-pullin’ ’em, I ’spect. An’ lights a cumin’ frum no whar, an’ a drawin’ even th’ bugs tuh ’em—let ’lone folks. An’ water a-goin’ everywhar, in th’ streets an’ in th’ houses, an’ now these heyeh people a cumin’ an’ puttin’ up trees in houses an’ a-kiverin’ on ’em with silvery things an’ bags an’ oranges, fer no other resun than jest to gin ’em away tuh leetle children an’ folks as is nothin’ to ’em, ’s too much fer me, let me tell ye! That air ’oman whut teaches is mighty smart an’ kalkulated tuh do a heap o’ good, but sich goin’s-on as they’s hed this Chris’mas hev unhinged me, an’ I am jest out an’ I ’spects I’ll hev tuh stay out. It looks tuh me that th’ en’ I hez done bin preachin’ ’bout am most heyeh, an’ th’ ol’ days o’ meetin’ under y’ur own vine an’ fig tree am gone furever. We ol’ uns air ’bout sealed up an’ done fer, an’ I’ll hev tuh go back in th’ mount’ins whar these ‘new fangled thin’s’ hev nuver bin hearn tell on.”

Who can wonder that the old man felt and talked as he did, when all his habits of thought and feeling and action, hardened and fixed by many years of trial and work, were plunged without warning into a new

world, which had little patience with his dulness of apprehension and his slowness. He and his kind could not change, and therefore must always go down before what men are fond of calling "the march of civilisation."



## XVII

### UNCLE HARVE'S VISIT

**M**R. GORDON on his way to the post-office turned the corner of the street upon which the office was located, and saw a man very much confused by the crowd that was gathered at that place every morning except Sunday. A coat and an old wool hat, the rim of which flopped down and hid the upper part of his face, so disguised Uncle Harve that Mr. Gordon did not at first know him. But as he came nearer the bewildered man, he recognised his mountain friend and extended his hand to him in cordial greeting.

The face of the old man changed its entire expression as soon as he saw by whom he was addressed, and transferring his Winchester to his left hand, his right went out to Mr. Gordon for a mountain grip of recognition and confidence.

"Bin astin' an' lookin' fer y'u an' that Keith man everywhar. Mought as well look fer a needle in a hay-stack as fer a man in this heyeh rush an' cum back on it. It's wus than a hailstorm when out a-deer-huntin', when y'u kain't see a soul nur heyeh th' dogs. I'd jest 'bout made up my min' tuh go back on me tracks an' git tuh a place whar a man kin heyeh somethin' 'sides screackes, an' see

somethin' 'cept houses; but thar's some folks 'bout heye  
I'se jest got tuh see 'fore I goes back."

While Uncle Harve was talking, Mr. Gordon was drawing him gently out of the crowd and leading him towards Keith's office.

"I am ever so glad to see you," Mr. Gordon said. "I hope your sick daughter is quite well by this time. How are all the Finleys?"

"My gal's well 'nough tuh be out yander in th' wagon. Sis an' Bub Finley's 'ith her. I fotch 'em 'long that they mought bring somethin' tuh sell that they's got, an' so they mought see some o' thar kin-folks, whut lives a matter o' a mile ur two up th' cove from this heye place."

When they came to the four-story brick and stone building in which Keith had his office, Uncle Harve, looking at its front from the opposite side of the street, stopped stock-still, and gazed with wide-open eyes and mouth. In the corner of the building was an up-to-date family supply store, with a display of fruit, both green and dried, in its windows. Hanging from a beam, outside the window, was a large bunch of bananas.

All the time they were crossing the street Uncle Harve looked into this window as if he was fascinated. He had never seen anything like a pineapple or other tropical fruits, nor even heard of them. He did not understand that they were for eating; indeed, the sight of them "jest obfuscated" him, as he said when he got home. When he slowly raised his eyes, with the dignity becoming a

mountaineer of his standing and saw the bunch of bananas, his power to resist a show of surprise was broken down utterly.

"I'll be gosh darned, ef them hain't th' bigges' beans I uver seed in all me born days! See heyeh, Mr. Preacher, I'd like tuh know how big that air vine wuz whut growed 'em?"

Mr. Gordon knew it would not do to laugh or show any unusual concern, as he did not wish to hurt the old man's feelings. He had therefore to control himself and get him to go up the two flights of stairs to Keith's office. This he succeeded in doing, after a while, and when he had him seated in an arm chair, with a stuffed leather seat, and fronting the roller-top desk, he excused himself upon the plea of going to look Keith up.

Uncle Harve was holding his gun firmly in his grasp, and slowly trying to acquaint himself with the nature of his surroundings, when the two young men came into the office.

"It's a real treat to see you. When did you come to the city?" Keith said, as, with genuine pleasure in his face, he welcomed the old man.

"Jest a leetle while ago, I reckon, but fer a fac', I'm mos' afeered tuh say, things am so curious heyehabouts. S'pose I've got tuh let Mandy an' Sis an' Bub Finley see all these quar things, bein' as they's done cum so fer frum home tuh see 'em. Blast my ol' eyes, ef I don't wish I hed 'em all safe back in our own range agin. Young

folks hain't seasoned 'nuff tuh see whut's spread out 'roun heyeh 'fore y'r eyes 'ithout bein' flustered an' beat out by em, I kin' o' reckon."

Keith flushed when he heard that Ruth Finley was with the old man. He had been trying to work out some plan by which he could see her again and had concluded that he would try a deer-hunt, when the right time of the year came round. Now she was in the city, and he could at least meet her, even if she would not talk to him.

"Where are the young people?" Mr. Gordon asked, coming to Keith's help.

"Outen th' wagon yander across th' road whar that air engine runs. I don't know's I kin fin' 'em right handy, I'se so turned round an' up a tree, but let's go fer them young folks. I've bin from 'em a mighty long time, I reckon they thinks."

The well-dressed minister and lawyer, walking upon each side of the old mountaineer, armed with a Winchester and two revolvers, "cut a queer figure," as they went down the pavement of the principal street in the city.

"Somebody either dying or dead, I suppose." "Just like these fellows, hobnobbing with the wild men of the mountains." "Wonder where they are going and for what," were some of the comments made by the people seeing them.

Passing by where Mr. Gordon lived, Uncle Harve was persuaded to go into the house for a few minutes and to

be introduced to Mrs. Gordon, who gave him a most cordial welcome to Yellowboro.

Although very simply dressed, the material and style of her clothing were so different from his mountain ideas of what women should wear at any time, much less when about their household duties, as well as her polished manners, so amazed Uncle Harve that he could not for a time use his direct and positive style of speech.

In talking about her to Mandy and Sis, one day at home, he said, "I niver seed anythin' so slick and smooth like 'cept wil' varmints an' sich like, whar God made 'em all dressed up as He wanted 'em.

"Then when she opened that thar head o' hern th' words jest rolled outen her mouth like water runnin' over th' rocks an' made you feel all pleasant, like y'u does whun th' birds air a-singin' in th' spring-time."

Leaving Mr. Gordon's, and going out into a part of the city which was not paved, our party came upon a wagon, to which was hitched a pair of old mules that, like their owner, had seen their best days; and had been part of the flotsam and jetsam thrown into the mountains at the close of the war. It was not unusual for the Kentucky mule to do good service when thirty-five years of age, and judging from the appearance of these "Kentucky buglers" and the United States brand upon their shoulders, they were near that age. Uncle Harve had never told how he got them, and Uncle Sam was too busy with other things to rush into the mountains to ask about it.

In the wagon were Mandy and Ruth, while Bub was standing with Pete Finley's rifle in his left hand, and leaning upon the wagon with his right, in the mind and attitude of one feeling his responsibility and ready to meet everything required of him without fear or favour.

The gentlemen, on coming to the wagon, saluted Bub with heartiness and kindness, and offered their hands to Ruth and Mandy. Ruth, with her face all a-glow with blushes, did not accept either of the hands extended to her, nor did she offer her own. She turned her lustrous eyes down and her face a little to one side, and simply murmured, "Good-mornin'; hope I see y'u well."

"That black-haired gal's my Mandy," Uncle Harve said, and that was all the introduction given.

Mr. Gordon proposed at once that the ladies should get out of the wagon and permit Mr. Keith and himself to show them the city.

"We will go by our house and see my wife, and she will have dinner for us when we come back from our trip through the town."

The girls were so shy, and felt so out of place at the strange situation, that no persuasion of Mr. Gordon could move them from the wagon. Bub said, "I cum heyeh fer tuh see whut's goin' on an' I'm bound tuh see it, an' ef y'u gals won't go, I'm a-goin' with these folks ur by me lone."

This statement was too much for Ruth, as she had taken care of Bub all his life and had promised her

mother, when she consented to let him come on the trip, "not tuh let him git outen her sight fer a single minute." Softly she said to Mandy, "I hev jest got tuh go. Y'u cum too, won't y'u?"

Uncle Harve overheard this, and put in his word before Mandy could reply. "Yes, she's goin'. Whut she cum fer? To set in th' wagon night an' day an' not see nur hear nothin'? Now, gals, cum out o' that wagon, I tells ye."

Slowly, and with great deliberation, the girls rose and walked to the front of the wagon, stepped down upon the tongue and then placing the right hand upon the mule and holding with the left to a bow of the wagon, which held the cover on the wagon in place, walked to the end of the double-tree, and jumped to the ground.

They had declined help from the gentlemen, and both Uncle Harve and Bub were too well-acquainted with their ways to offer any.

Mr. Gordon was brave, but when he saw the tall, lank form of Mandy and the full habit of Sis, he realised that he was shorter than either of them, and took in the picture he would make when he walked through the town with them dressed in full mountain array.

Mr. Gordon's panic was, however, only for a moment, for when he thought of his wife and the interest she felt in the mountaineers, and her desire to help them, with proud port and cheerful face he led his charge down into the city.

Bub and Sis clung to each other as if they were afraid to be separated by an inch. Bub had left his gun with great reluctance in the wagon, but the sense of protecting Sis and being protected by her was a stay to him.

Mandy would not walk with the gentlemen, and so the three mountaineers walked together behind them, which prevented Mr. Keith from paying any special attention to Ruth, if that had been his wish; for though a judge of expression could see that he was of more interest to her than the city, or any or all the sights within it, she thought she was hiding her feelings.

In nothing does the peculiar character of the mountain whites show itself with more distinctness than in the way they meet what is an astonishment to them. There were no ejaculations, no "oh, my's," or "did you ever see the like?" and "isn't it wonderful?" Bub made some remarks which we will not repeat here, and for which Sis pulled the sleeve of his coat to stop him; but the girls, for the most part, maintained a discreet silence, and only by exchanging glances suggested what was going on in their thoughts.

When the party reached Mr. Gordon's house they were ushered into the simple parlour, more splendid to them than anything in their dreams—for they had never seen or heard of the Arabian Nights, or like books, and in satisfying a natural curiosity at the furniture and ornaments on the mantel, tables, and walls, they showed that



new sensations were being felt by them, both pleasant and wonderful.

"Good-morning, ladies," said Mrs. Gordon, with a kindness which won its way to their hearts, because it was untouched by any air of superiority to those for whom it was intended. Taking each of the girls by the hand she began to talk to them so sweetly that they forgot their embarrassment, and replying to her questions, followed her lead in the conversation with evident pleasure.

"What do you think of our city? I hope you are pleased with it. It is only a short time since it was a corn-field, with woods around it," Mrs. Gordon explained.

"I nuver seed nothin' so strange, an' I don't know how to think on it," Mandy replied. "Seems like thar's more things in them air stores than 'll uver git sold, 'cause I don't see whar th' folks is tuh cum frum tuh buy 'em all. An' then th' houses air so big an' tall, I don't see how folks air to git to th' top on 'em."

"Dear, won't you please sing some of your best songs for the young ladies?" Mr. Gordon asked his wife.

Mrs. Gordon sang the old song "Home, Sweet Home." Lovely and penetrating, her voice brought out the sentiment of the words, which, together with the music, aroused the sympathy in the mountain girls, and tears told how deeply they had been affected. She then gave them a stately march, which so captivated Bub that he did not tire of telling the boys, when he returned home,

how "she jest pulled th' music outen that air chist 'til th' creeps run down me back like all fury."

Keith tried to induce Ruth to talk to him, but as it finally came to him that her conduct was no evidence of how or what she thought of him, and that he was taking from her enjoyment by his efforts, he concluded to subside and let Mrs. Gordon do the talking.

Ruth was much impressed by Mrs. Gordon and took in everything about her—her dress, the way she arranged her hair, the tones of her voice, and the kindness which showed its power in the subtle way in which one woman feels what another woman is.

Ruth and Mandy had taken off their sunbonnets and laid them on their laps, as was the usual custom in their country, as soon as they were seated, and the gentle way in which Mrs. Gordon had removed them, and the tact she showed in giving them upholstered chairs of a kind not too different in style from those to which they had been accustomed, prepared the way for the meal, which was now ready. The girls felt full confidence in Mrs. Gordon's desire to treat them as her equals, and so the first meal they were to partake of, with the furniture and appliances of civilised life, was not an ordeal, but a pleasure.

The napkins were the first thing to puzzle them, for they had never seen one before, and rarely a towel, as most of their people dried their faces and hands by other means. Mrs. Gordon saw the trouble they were in,

almost as soon as they were seated, and most ostentatiously made use of the one she had, which movement Mr. Gordon, strange to say, though a man, saw through and followed. Ruth, with great dignity and calmness, did as the others, and in a few moments gave Bub a hint, which he took, and the worst was over.

Upon the table was a medium quantity of silver and some cut-glass. The astonishment of the mountain people at these things may be indicated by Bub's account of the forks. He called them "split spoons," and declared that "y'u couldn't stick nothin' with 'em, an' he wondered whut in th' Heavens an' th' yearth they wuz fer, anyhow!"

The meal being over, the gentlemen reinforced Mrs. Gordon in asking the girls to stay at the house while in the city, but were met with the statement that they "hed tuh go an' be 'ith thar kinfolks, th' Pools, jest up th' cove, as they hadn't seen 'em fer a long time, an' they'd be jest furious mad ef they passed 'em by."

Upon their return to the wagon, Uncle Harve was found in a great good humour. He had eaten his fill of the provisions brought with him, and had sold the dried apples and eggs and other things, including the sang he had for the market, at what he considered good prices, though he had been badly cheated by the dealers, who took advantage of his ignorance.

He had come forty miles to sell these things, and he said he had never had a market close to him before. He

was in high "didos" because of his success in his first effort.

"Wall, I reckon y'u gals hed better git in an' let us be a-movin', ur we won't git tuh Tom's afore sundown."

"How long will you stay in our neighbourhood, Uncle Harve?" asked Mr. Keith.

"Oh, a matter o' two ur three days, ef these heyeh gals don't git homesick."

"Coming to town to-morrow?"

"Maybe so," Uncle Harve answered.

"I'll walk out there in the evening, anyhow, and see you," Keith said, as the wagon moved off.

## XVIII

### HELL'S HALF-ACRE

**U**NCLE HARVE and Tom Pool, at whose house he was staying, walked out after dark that night, and knowledge of the whereabouts and doings of Clem Jones and Ham Simms was quickly in the possession of the man whose heart was set on having it.

When the feud was stopped, as was told in a former part of this story, these young men left the region of their recent crime, and came to Yellowboro, to get and keep out of sight, and to find some work, by which to make a living. They had made several trips to the place before, which accounted for much of their flippancy of speech and habits of gross profanity and drunkenness.

Clem soon got a place as helper in a saloon, and as a messenger who could be relied upon to go into the woods and bring forth "moonshine" in any quantity wanted, and Ham, first as a driver, and then as a pimp at "Hell's Half-Acre."

They thought themselves and their history unknown to those with whom they associated, and that they were safe from harm on account of their earlier career. This belief was correct, as far as the people were concerned who were served by them, but little that they did was al-

lowed to pass unnoticed by one who reported it to those who wanted to keep them in their knowledge at every turn.

Bright and early next morning a man was at "Hell's Half-Acre," which is at the point where the States of Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee come together on the top of the mountain range. For some cause, whether a matter of boundary lines or not, none of the three States could or would assert jurisprudence over this small and rugged piece of land, and it was without law, or officer of the law. The king of misrule had it in his clutches, and no one who stopped in it for a moment, or passed along the road which led across the mountain at the Gap, and which ran through this strip of land, had any protection for property or life, so far as the law was concerned.

There were places where "moonshine" was sold without let or hindrance, and if you were not willing or able to pay the price asked for it in the cabins, and would step aside into the bushes, a man with a jug would sell it at twenty cents a gallon, or would give you as much of the fiery white liquid as you would care to drink if you would play cards or throw dice with him.

No one could tell the number of men who went into this place and were never heard of again. Murders were committed in the full glare of noon. No coroner ever went there to ask for the bodies of the slain men, and small hillocks over which the buzzards circled, showed where they were hastily hidden from sight.

Gambling of the lowest and most desperate kind was the business of those who went there for what they, in their infatuation, called pleasure; and drunken men might be seen lying on their faces on the side of the road in a stupefaction, which as often as not, resulted in death.

The man who went there, that morning, carried with him a jug full of "moonshine," making pretence of wishing to sell it. He asked a price which he knew no one would pay, and so when he had stood around the place long enough to be sure that what he was seeking for was not to be found there, he quickly and quietly sought another place.

He had been in a number of these dens, and finding nothing, he was about giving up his search and making his retreat, as best he could, when, from behind a place which was made of fence rails, put up after the common plan of a hog pen, and covered with branches with the leaves on them, and hardly high enough for a man to stand in, he saw one of the men for whom he was seeking, Boldly approaching, he offered to sell the jug and its contents at such a small price that the man asked him to come into his lair that he might test the quality of the whiskey, and, if it pleased him, get the money with which to pay for it.

The other man who was being sought was asleep on the floor on a pile of leaves mixed with a little straw. While the sale was being completed and the money paid, this man, disturbed by the talking, rose up and sat on

his "swine's" bed, and joined in the talking. "Who's th' man y'u'r got in heyeh? Do y'u know him?"

"Naw," was the reply. "Do yu reckon I knows everybody in the world? I only bought this whiskey frum him, an' it's mighty good, I tell y'u. Git up an' take a drink o' it an' see fer y'uself."

The sleeper, who was Clem Jones, got up, and, taking the jug in both hands, held it up and poured into his mouth a deep draught of the fiery stuff. Putting it down, he said, "That's mighty good moonshine—double-distilled. I wants more on it fer my folks in th' city. Whar kin I fin' y'u, so's I kin cum fer it when I wants it?"

"Oh, tell me whar to bring it an' I'll fetch it a'most any time," the man replied.

"Naw, I wants tuh cum arter it, an' then I'll see whar y'u makes it."

This was not wanted, for the man did not make the whiskey, but had bought it, paying twice what he got for it, the selling of it being simply a blind to find out where these men would be for the next twenty-four hours, and, if possible, what they would be doing.

Ham Simms broke in, "Don't make no difference whar it's made, so's we git it when we wants it an' at th' price we wants it. Stranger, bring me twice as much as this jug holds day arter to-morrer, an' I'll take it from y'u. Now, Clem, sober up. You know we've got tuh go down th' mount'in by three o'clock, an' y'u got tuh be ready."

Our searcher having now learned what he had come



for, as soon as he could, went away, promising to bring the whiskey when it was asked for. Leaving the hut, he was careful to go into the woods on the side of the road opposite the direction of his home, and to keep a tree between himself and the place from which he was now getting away. He did not know who was in "Hell's Half-Acre," or whether his errand had been suspected or not. If it had, he might look for a bullet, or several of them, at any moment.

Feeling himself at last out of danger, he changed his course, crossed the road, and took a straight line for those who were waiting to hear his report, which was just what they desired.

About two o'clock, Ham Simms got ready to go down the mountain, and found to his great anger that Clem Jones was too drunk to go with him. Clem had liked the whiskey so well, that he could not help turning the jug up several times, and had got more than even his seasoned body could contain and meanwhile walk around.

Closing the door and leaving Clem on the inside, Ham, gun in hand, and pistols at his waist, started down the mountain. He had delayed so long trying to sober up Clem that he was in great haste.

At a turn in the road, as you look when you are going west, you will see rocks piled upon rocks until you think they are among the grandest specimens of the class to which they belong in the world. These rocks are not so close together at every point as they seem from the





"I AM STOPPED AS STILL AS THOUGH STRUCK

road. There are numerous gaps and chasms there, into which a man can crawl, and from which he can see the road and anyone passing along it without himself being seen.

A man had been in these rocks for an hour or more. He had carefully chosen his place where he could see anyone for some distance as he passed him. Men in wagons, on horseback, and on foot, had passed, but none of them were the men he was looking for. He was waiting and watching for Clem Jones and Ham Simms. He had expected them for a half-hour, and was impatient because they had not come.

But now he saw a man on foot take the turn around the curve in the road, and knew him to be Ham Simms, though it disappointed him to see that he was alone. He placed his Winchester in position, resting it on a small ledge of the rock, and when Ham Simms was in the place for his purpose, he shouted: "Ham Simms, y'u cowardly cur-dog, do y'u remember Bill an' Sher Miller?"

Ham stopped as still as if struck by a bolt of lightning, and, turning his face as if by instinct towards the place from which the familiar voice sounded, he instantly took his Winchester from his shoulder. He knew that his end had come when he heard that voice and those words, and felt that all hell was moving to meet him at his coming.

There was a clear report of a rifle from the rocks, and, almost before it went out to startle the mountain echoes,

Ham Simms sprang into the air and fell to the ground, dead before he struck it, shot through the heart.

The man in the rocks only looked for a moment, and before the smoke had cleared away, he was out of his hiding-place, and with care and ease had begun to descend the mountain.

## XIX

### THE MOUNTAIN GIRL MAKES A DETERMINATION

**I**T was a picturesque walk, and stimulating alike to fancy and feeling, which Keith took that afternoon up the cove, between the shaggy sides of the mountains, to see Ruth Finley.

He could not help contrasting nature, in her rugged simplicity and virgin purity, with the jarring and self-conscious works of man. Better what God has put the impress of His perfection upon, than what man holds out as the expression of his genius and the reflection of himself.

It is good to use the materials laid in lines of beauty on the sides of these mountains, and within them, for the changing of the world, in much which a utilitarian age is in need of; but the doing of it leaves the mountains bare, stripped of nature's covering and seamed upon their sides with fearful gaps and chasms, and without nature's curves of symmetry. They are sometimes made to appear larger, yet no one will be so lost to the sense of proportion and grace as to claim that they are more lovely.

"Does this line of thinking," he asked himself, "explain the deep and intense interest I feel in my mountain

girl—and would education and refinement take away her charm? Education both takes away and puts within. It polishes and cuts the gem and turns it to the light of a sun of opportunity.

“Yes, I see an ideal woman in what Ruth might become when the future has done its work for her, and when full bloom tells the tale of what the bud was born to become.”

So Keith reflected as he walked on toward a sight—most to be desired by him and all true men—of one woman in all the world who mated his spirit and was partner with it forever.

Ruth was looking for him, and feeling so strange from the knowledge of this fact, that—wild child of nature as she was—she was disposed to run away from him rather than to show how glad she was to see him.

Her mother had left her nature, in all such phases, as uncultured as the bare peaks of the mountains towering above their cabin, and now, left to herself, without a human being to whom she could speak in confidence, she had to follow her feelings in rejecting what was evil and taking what was good in that eddy where currents cross in life's onward rush to test what is in us and sweep us on to our destiny. Fed upon the teachings of the “Old Elder” from her earliest recollection, she believed implicitly that God was doing all things for the best.

Thus feeling, she did not run away, as she was much tempted to do, as seated upon the little porch, shaded by

an immense ground vine, she saw Keith turn into the path which led from the bars to the house. She did not rise to meet him, but stayed where she was and looked at him every step of his way.

He stepped upon the puncheon floor of the porch, and began to knock at the door, but, seeing her, stopped, and, turning, offered his hand, saying, "I am so glad to see you, Ruth." She did not move, but extended a hand, which he grasped for a moment, and then stood looking down upon her.

She did not speak, but, thrilled by contact with the hand which had touched hers, the tell-tale blood gave crimson to her cheeks, which warning she took and immediately turned away her eyes, in that inimitable way which pure, wild creatures have. Her soul had taken its vow, and nothing could ever shake its constancy. That handclasp, so meaningless in your conventional life, was to her a radical departure, and to give a man her hand to clasp in his meant nothing less than giving him her heart.

Mr. Keith stood there and talked on and on without getting answer to anything he said. She listened, and, if he could have seen her eyes, and had not been prevented by man's inherent stupidity in such matters, he would have seen the one answered to all and every remark he made, in the revelation that she was more interested in the man who was speaking than in all he was saying.



He remarked, after a time, that he was coming up in the fall after frost, to go deer-hunting with Uncle Harve, and that he hoped to see her then.

Then she spoke, and though without any apparent emotion, what she said reacted upon her with force, as do all great determinations when declared for the first time, "I won't be thar."

"Where shall you be? You surprise me greatly."

"I'll be at th' Cou't-House in th' school Preacher Gordon tol' me 'bout."

"Does your mother know of this, and has she consented to it?" he asked eagerly.

"I hain't said nothin' 't all 'bout it afore, but I've made my min' up an' I'm goin' shore."

Keith had never heard anything like this from a seventeen-year-old girl, and, of course, was unable to take in its full meaning; but, like many another man, he was to be taught the force of some of the noblest things in mankind, from the way the mountaineers of Kentucky met and conquered difficulties.

Ruth knew that she would have opposition from all her relations and friends every step of the path she had chosen, but since she had met and felt the quality of Mrs. Gordon, and was made to see her own deficiencies, and knew she loved the man with whom she was talking, her resolution was formed to be all she could become for his sake, and nothing could break it.

Undismayed and without even a thought of failure,

this untutored maid unflinchingly set her face towards the goal of her hope.

"Why, Sis Finley, who ever seed th' likes o' y'u? Thar's th' gentleman standin' an' y'u hain't ast him tuh take a seat an' set down, I do believe," said Mandy, as she came to the door. "Cum out under the sweet gum-tree on th' side o' th' house, an' set on th' bench. Y'u kin see somethin' then 'sides a gourd vine, an' git th' air."

The three moved out and found a much more pleasant place, and, being joined by some of the people of the house, had begun a cheery talk, when to their surprise Uncle Harve, who had hastily entered the door at the back of the house without them seeing him—came out, and, though he seemed a little out of breath, joined in the conversation.

"Wall, gals," he said, "reckon we'll all be goin' tuh-morrer, so soon as it's light nuff fer th' mules tuh see th' road. I've done seen all I wants tuh see o' these parts fer a while."

"Why, Uncle Harve," the women all said at once,—in the way they have,—"y'u promised tuh stay over Sunday an' take us tuh hear Mr. Gordon preach a sarment. We all wants tuh hear him 'cause we likes him, an' we nuver heard a preacher from th' North an' nuver wuz in a town church."

"I can't leave y'u tuh cum by y'rselves an' I tells y'u I'm boun' tuh start in th' mornin', an' so y'u mus' jest git ready tuh go, an' that's all I' got tuh say 'bout it."

"But Uncle Harve, I wanted to show you the water-works, and the electric light plant, and the furnaces, and now you go right off without giving me the chance," Mr. Keith remonstrated.

"Seen more an' I wants tuh see a'ready 'round heyeh, an' thar's somethin' tuh 'tend tuh at me cabin right now whut won't bear waitin'. Mus' be off, an' when y'u cums up fer th' deer-hunt we talked 'bout, y'u kin tell me some more 'bout it," the old hunter replied.

Seeing it was useless to urge a man of Uncle Harve's calibre to change his mind, and also knowing that he would not have another opportunity to speak to Ruth in private, Keith was about to say good-bye and start to return to Yellowboro, when Tom Pool and Bub came into the group,—Bub in a very excited manner telling that he had seen a man who said that a little after three o'clock, on the big road leading through the gap, Ham Simms had been killed by someone hiding in the rocks, and that his body had been left in the road to wait for the coroner and some men were now out hunting for the man who had shot him.

The news—if it was news to every member of the party—excited all of them. The women and Bub had no idea that Ham Simms was anywhere near the place, but believed him to be in Arkansas or Texas. Then they knew instinctively that his being killed, as was told, meant that if he had not got into new troubles, the Stokes-Mack feud was likely to be renewed at once. There was

no more resistance to the plan of going home the next morning. If the news of what had happened reached the mountains where the Finleys lived, before they did, Uncle Harve would be in danger of being shot by the first man of the Mack side who saw him.

Keith bade them all farewell except Uncle Harve, who walked a short distance down the road with him.

"Now, young man, don't bring no guns an' thin's when y'u cum up arter frost, fer I've got a big-bore gun, which 's jest whut y'u wants, an' ef y'u don't take th' buck ager, y'u'll git somethin' tuh show fer y'r cumin' when y'u gits home."

"Uncle Harve, what about Sis Finley going to Smith's Court House to school? Have you heard anything about it?" Mr. Keith asked.

"My sakes alive, whut y'u talkin' 'bout? Pete Finley's widdar niver in this worl' 'll 'low that tuh be. She's plumb set agin' it. Sis's niver goin' tuh git 'way frum her tuh go tuh school now. She's bin tuh th' log school-house an' got all th' edication she's goin' tuh need, an' whut's plenty fer any 'oman, an' she hain't goin' tuh no tother place tuh git more, I tells y'u! Her mother 'll hold on tuh her 'til she fin's a man an' goes tuh live in a cabin on th' spur o' that mountain 'bove th' spring."

"But, Uncle Harve, if she had the desire to be taught, why shouldn't she have her wish and get all that this school can give her?"

"She knows more now an' her mam does, an' whut's

she goin' tuh do 'ith more in th' mount'ins, while she's milkin' cyows an' cardin' an' spinnin' an' cuttin out an' makin' clo'es, 'sides cookin' an' washin' an' ironin' an' raisin' gyardin stuff an' chickens an' ducks an' geese, an' so many other thin's I can't think on 'em all? We bin in heyeh sence our folks got heyeh when th' Revolution War wuz over, an' we bin gittin' on arter our own way, an' we air not a-goin' tuh be led by th' nose by no new notions frum new kind o' preachers, sich as we nuver hearn on afore."

"But you see how the world's changing, don't you? Look at Mrs. Gordon. Isn't she a fine lady, and wouldn't you like to see Ruth educated as she is?"

"Mrs. Gordon's mighty purty an' I likes tuh look at her an' hear her talk, but le' me ast you, whut 'ould she do in th' mount'ins with all I done bin tellin' y'u a 'oman hez tuh do thar, an' a pa'cel o' cryin' children tuh boot on her hands? We air jest rough folks an' lives in rough places, an' we hez rough ways an' we hez tuh be on th' lan' tuh bear an' do whut's ourn in our own place, an' that's all thar is tuh say 'bout it. Sis 'll nuver go tuh no school, but that un whut 's hard work on that ol' farm o' th' Finleys, so good-bye," and the men parted.

## XX

### A MEETING OF FRIENDS

**T**OM POOL, at whose house Uncle Harve and his young people stayed when at Yellowboro, was on a visit to the Stokeses, that faction in the blood feud so recently stopped. Pool was related to most of the men on that side, so that his visit brought a number of them to Stokes' place, among whom were the old Elder, Uncle Harve, and the Finleys.

What interested the company most were the arrest and lynching of Clem Jones at Yellowboro, which had recently taken place, and of which but little was known in his old home.

Pool was so full of the subject that he only needed a question now and then to give them all the information they desired.

"How'd they git him?" Uncle Harve asked; "he wuz sich a slippery cuss, I can't see how them officers, whut looked so much like a horse-block all dressed up in men's clo'es, could get him."

"Oh! he hed so much liquor in him," Pool replied, "that he wuz a-lyin' on th' rocks' sleepin' off his drunk, when about twenty o' them folks that lives 'roun' th' saloons, and sich like places, foun' him."

"He roused up an' showed so much fight, that ef he hedn't staggered so as tuh fall over a loose rock, an' then down thirty ur forty feet on th' mount'in side, an' knocked th' senses out o' him, so they hed him tied afore he knew a thing of it, he'd 'a' run th' whole pack o' 'em tuh cover.

"They wuz so afeered o' him, that tyin' his hands behin' his back wuzn't 'nuff fer 'em, but two on 'em kep' hol' all th' way tuh th' jail, like as ef they feared he'd creep out o' his skin, an' knock 'em all tuh death 'ith his bones."

"Pears like y'u got mighty brave men down in that thar town. Wonder ef they hain't afeered o' that ol' scare-crow I seen out in y'r co'nfiel'. You jest put a gun on his shoulder, Tom, an' see 'em run pas' y'ur house 'ith all th' links o' speed let out o' 'em, Uncle Harve said.

"That hain't th' worst o' it, fer they beat him 'till he wuz all bruised, an' cussed him till th' talk he hears in th' place he's gone tuh must seem very plain tuh him."

"Whar wuz th' jail keeper an' th' officers o' th' law when sich goin's-on wuz bein' done?" the Elder remarked.

"That's like lettin' th' buzzards pick an ol' hog 'fore ye knocks it in th' head."

"Th' jail-man tol' a man that he wuz afeered tuh say a word, fer th' officers in their blue coats wuz th' fiercest an' meanest an' he hed tuh look as long as he

could an' then it got so bad he jest hed tuh turn his eyes away ur he'd 'a' got sick at th' sight.

"He says he kin see Clem now at nights in his dreams, sayin' not a word an' actin' more like a man than any o' them blasted cowards, whut beat him when he wuz unarmed an' boun'."

Uncle Harve fired up at this and said, "Elder, them cowards hed on clothes like whut we wore in th' army, ef they air like them whut I seed when I wuz down thar."

"Then it ought tuh be stripped off 'em. Sich as they air oughtn't tuh wear anythin' like whut brave men wears," the Elder replied.

"They beat him 'til they wuz afeered they'd kill him," Pool went on, "an' then they throwed him down on a heap o' dirty straw, not fit fur a dog bed, an' tol' him they wuz a-comin' fer him that night tuh take him out an' hang him.

"The jail man said that Clem began tuh see somet'in' that scared him so, he rolled from one side o' th' cell tuh th' tother an' wailed about some folks he called Sher an' Bill Miller.

"He yelled that he seen 'em everywhar—when he shut his eyes as well as when they wuz open.

"He'd cry, 'I'm willin' tuh die; that's all ye kin ast, jest go 'way an' leave me.'

"Then he'd call fer someone named Ham, and beg him to take Sher an' Bill away.



"An' so he yelled an' rolled an' foamed at th' mouth 'til th' crowd cum tuh hang him."

"Them's hell torments, 'bout whut I bin tellin' ye fer forty year, bruthren," the Elder said in a low voice, as if he felt near to eternity.

"Yes, it air hell afore ye gits thar; which air God A'mighty jest a-lettin' th' nuver-dyin' worm o' remorse begin tuh gnaw afore ye gits tuh whar th' fire sharpens his teeth.

"Sich as Tom is tellin' us ought tuh make us meek like an' ready tuh fall down afore th' Lord an' beg fer parding fer our sins; fer, bruthrun, we jest hez a hell in our own selves whut kin be made tuh scorch an' sting us whenever it please God tuh hev it so."

"Yes, Elder," Uncle Harve added, 'I jest knows that's so. I hev felt on it meself, an' thar's bin times when I wuz fearder o' meself an' me own feelin's an' whut I were a-thinkin' on 'an all th' Macks in this neck o' woods.

"A man mus'n't be afeered tuh be by hisself nur tuh lis'en tuh whut's inside o' him ef he air tuh pass fer a brave man.

"How does y'u look at it, Stokes?"

"I'm jest like y'u, Uncle Harve, I fin' th' worst o' these heyeh fights hain't when yer in th' lorrel a-hidin', nur when yer blood's up an' y'u're a-seein' th' Macks a-runnin' ur a-fallin', but arter hit's over an' yer a-thinkin' on it all.

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"I can't see Mack's house yander, 'ithout thinkin' on him when I las' seen him a-drawin' up his legs an' quiverin' when he lay a-dyin' over thar in th' woods lot, an' feelin' a pity like fer his wife an' child'en an' a-wishin' they'd 'low me divide me craps 'ith 'em."

"Jim, don't y'u min' whut I bin a-preachin' tuh y'u all th' time y'u bin a-comin' tuh meetin' that God jest fixes thin's an' we can't help oursel's? God makes us do 'em, an' we only hev tuh gin Him th' glory fer our doin' of 'em. Ye can't git 'roun' God, Jim, an' y'u mus'n't mourn 'bout His doin's."

"I min's, Elder, I min's, but ef that's so why'n't God then do all th' sufferin' 'bout it all, 'ithout makin' us do whut He says, an' then makin' us suffer fer doin' o' His will. I hain't no Methody an' I don't like thar howlin' an' rollin' in th' straw one single leetle bit, but I can't make out how I hain't 'sponsible fer whut I does ef I air tuh suffer fer th' doin' on it.

"Whut fer did Clem Jones see th' faces o' them two boys Pool hez bin a-tellin' us 'bout ef God made him kill 'em?"

"Now, Jim, y'u jest min' whut 'lection is as I hev tol' y'u 'bout in mos' every sarment y'u hears me preach. Some air 'lected tuh doin' evil an' some air 'lected tuh doin' good."

"That's why we air named '*Two Seed Baptis's*.' Th' seed o' Adam tuh do evil an' th' seed o' Christ tuh do good, an' y'u air o' Christ as is all our Baptis' folks.

Clem Jones air o' Adam like all th' Macks an' th' Methodys an' sich."

"Well, Elder, y'u say hit's so an' I air tryin' tuh think so too, but, thar's somethin' on my heart whut all yer sayin's don't take out, an' I'm like Uncle Harve, mighty 'nough scared at whut air inside o' me an' talkin' tuh me."

"Now, Elder, save this fer y'r nex' sarment an' let Tom tell us more 'bout whut happened tuh Clem," Uncle Harve said.

"Well," continued Pool, "thar wuz a mount'in man cumin' home that night from a dance up Red Crick an' when he heared th' whistle blow, 'bout twelve o'clock, an' seen all th' 'lectric lights go out an' heared th' marchin' o' men towards th' jail, he ran an' hid under the bridge tuh save hisself an' tuh listen tuh whut wuz a-goin' on.

"He says that when he looked out he saw fifty men or more *a-marchin' 'ith guns* on thar shoulders, an' many on 'em he knew belonged tuh th' military company of th' town. They wuz holdin' Clem Jones up by th' arms—fer he couldn't walk—an' jest as they got him tuh th' bridge he gin a scream, that wuzn't like any this man hed ever heared, an' that wakened many o' th' folks in th' town, an' wuz dead in a minit.

"After he wuz dead they put a rope 'roun' his neck, an' fastenin' one end tuh th' bridge they pushed him off, an' while he wuz hangin' thar they beat him 'ith th' butts o'

thar guns, an' some of 'em throwed stones down on his body when it wuz swingin' in th' air.

"Then they went off a-laughin' an' a-talkin' jest as ef they hed bin at a quiltin' or a dance."

"How many on 'em wuz took up an' put in th' jail whar Clem wuz, an' wuz hanged as they ought tuh bin, I'd like tuh know?" Uncle Harve asked in a harsh and angry tone of voice.

"Oh, none of 'em. Mos' of th' people in th' town joked 'bout it, an' called it a 'necktie-party.' The mayor said he wuz mighty glad it hed bin done, an' hoped all sich 'ould be sarved th' same way, but when he heard tell that th' mount'in people wuz cumin' tuh town tuh see 'bout sich doin's he wanted tuh see his fo'ks in Knoxville, an' he went on th' fust train tuh see 'em."

The Elder was much excited by the account of this terrible deed, and had either forgotten about the question of human responsibility or felt that God required him to get raging mad then and there; and rising up in his wrath trumpeted in his preaching tones:

"Them people hain't no Kentuckians, not a mother's son on 'em—ou ah! Ef they is they wuz born in th' pennyr'yal country ur somewhar else, an' not in these mount'ins—ou ah!

"They jest needs tuh hev th' furious wrath o' God tuh eat 'em an' eat an' niver eat up, ah! fer all 'ternity—ou ah!

"Y'u, Harvey Turner, an' y'u, Jim Stokes, an' all o'

y'u, rise an' let's go tuh that thar place whut Tom Pool's bin a-tellin' us 'bout; an' smite 'em hip an' thigh from th' face o' th' yearth—ou ah!

"I hez an' in'ard call tuh do it, an' ef whut Jim Stokes hez bin talkin' 'bout should happen tuh be true, I air askin' tuh hev some 'sponsibility in th' doin' o' it. Ou! ah!"

"Hain't that so, brother Harve?"

"Stop, Elder, y'u're not at th' meetin' house, an' hain't got no call tuh preach us a sarment now. Ef ol' Kentuck air so disgraced as Tom hez bin tellin' us, an' them whut is a-settin' down tuh Frankford can't take th' disgrace off, I jest wants tuh know whut that ol' soldier, whut led his brigade 'longside o' ourn at th' battle o' Stone River an' who's a-settin' in the Pres'dent's cheer, hez tuh say 'bout sich goin's-on in these United States."

"I'll tell y'u," Pool remarked.

"The Sunday arter th' lynchin' I went tuh hear Mr. Gordon preach at th' Northern meetin'-house, as I promised him I would when he wuz tuh see y'u at my house.

"He jest up an' said in his sarment a heap 'bout that lynchin'.

"He said that every man in a free country hed th' right o' th' protection o' th' law till that law hed tried him fair, an' a jury o' his countrymen had brought a verdict'.

"He tol' em he knew nothin' 'bout whut Jones hed done 'fore he cum tuh th' town, but he hed bin hung fer no crime but bein' in company 'ith a man what hed

wounded a deputy in th' leg, an' who wuz out on bail an' goin' whar he wanted to.

"He hed written tuh President Harrison 'bout it all an' he read a letter from him sayin' he agreed 'ith Mr. Gordon that a great outrage hed bin done, but that he—th' President—couldn't do nothin' tuh put down sich outrages, 'less th' Governor o' Kentucky would call on him tuh do it.

"That Gordon preacher jest raved 'bout it, an' th' people jest looked pale an' said nothin', that I could hear, when they wuz goin' out.

"I jest walked up to him an' tol' him that though Clem Jones was th' worse cuss in th' mount'ins an' desarved tuh die a good many times fer whut he'd done 'fore he cum heyeh, that I wuz a loyal citizen of these United States, an' when he wanted anyone tuh help put down sich doin's he could jest reckon on me.

"He took my han' an' squeezed it an' said he knew thar wuzn't a mount'in man whut wouldn't rally an' go out tuh his death tuh stop such outrages.

"I felt proud tuh hear him say that, an' ye all knows he said th' truth."

"Yes, it air th' truth, but whut y'u think o' a country whar sich a man as Gene'al Benny Harrison, when President o' th' whole people an' Gene'al o' th' whole army, kin do nothin' tuh protect 'em from lynchin'?" asked Uncle Harve.

"I jest thinks ef it air so it ought tuh stop bein' so,"

cried the old Elder. "Every inch o' th' groun' o' this country ought tuh be safe fer all on us till we air jailed ur hung by th' law. That's whut we fit fer an' whut I air standin' fer now, even ef it pleased God tuh hev Clem Jones, who desaryed tuh die a thousan' deaths, hang by th' neck."

## XXI

### "SIS" GOES TO SCHOOL

"**S**IS, that Keith man ast me ef y'u wuz a-goin' to th' Cou't House tuh school arter y'u gits home,"

Uncle Harve observed, as they turned up the river on their way home. "I jest up an' tol' him that y'u done got all th' edication whut y'u wuz a-goin' tuh git, an' that all sich talk wuz nothin' but losin' breath a-blowin' on dead coals."

"I'm a-goin', anyhow, Uncle Harve," Sis replied, "an' all y'u uns can't keep me from a-goin'. I'm boun' tuh larn whut makes men like them preachers an' Mr. Keith an' that air 'oman, th' preacher's wife, different from whut I air an' whut y'u air."

Ruth did not grow red in the face and speak in a loud and imperious tone of voice, nor repeat her words.

She grew pale, and her eyes seemed to emit a light which shot out into the face of Uncle Harve, as her lips came together with firm lines.

"Why, gal, y'u look jest like Pete, y'r dad, this minit in them 'ar eyes, an' I begins tuh think y'u'll do jest like him when he sot his head on a thin'. He jest up an' done it, an' nothin' could stop him when he got a-goin'. Now,



gal, y'r mam 'll fight y'u 'til she's put under groun' an' y'u oughtn't tuh pester th' life outen her by any sich jim-cracks as y'u's talkin' 'bout. Whut y'u goin' tuh do 'ith all 'th edication y'u kin git at th' Cou't House arter y'us got it, I'd like tuh know? Y'u kin do all whut any 'oman need tuh do in these parts now, an' can't do nothin' any better arter all th' 'book larnin'' that air school hez got in y'r noggin. Then th' cost on it an' th' three year y'u air tuh be thar ought tuh make y'u let th' whole thing go by."

Sis heard all this, and seemed as if she was not going to say a word in reply. The old man looked into her face, hoping to see there such a change as would give him assurance that his words had convinced her of her error, and that she would give the matter up and say no more about it. He saw no change, but his look brought an answer which made him hopeless.

"Y'u needn't say 'nother word tuh me, Uncle Harve; as y'u said, I'm like my dad, an' I'm settled that, cum whut will, an' whuther it's a long time 'fore I start ur not, I'm goin' tuh th' Cou't House tuh that air school. Y'u an' th' ol' Elder air my gardeens, an' I says that my part o' th' lan' an' whut dad hed, I wants tuh spen' in goin', an' I will ef I hez tuh wait 'til I'm twenty-one."

Uncle Harve felt sure that this was the end of his efforts to reason with the girl, and the problem before him was now whether it was worth while to put difficulties in her way or not. He concluded to go and see

the Elder about it before broaching the subject to Mrs. Finley, of whose opposition he was certain.

Bub listened to all this and had come to the conclusion that Ruth, whom he had followed with perfect docility all his life, was, like all women-folks, only fit to do what men told them, and that she ought to be made to get into her place and stay there. He did not wait long after he got home to tell his mother about Sis “puttin’ on airs an’ talkin’ ’bout goin’ tuh school at th’ Cou’t House.”

“She up an’ tol’ Uncle Harve that he’d better shet up his head an’ let her ’lone fer she was a-goin’ ef it took her twenty year tuh do it. She thinks she can be like th’ preacher’s wife, an’ w’ar queer thin’s on her head an’ skins on her han’s an’ hev white thin’s on th’ table when y’r goes tuh eat, an’ all sich, which makes nothin’ but trouble, an’ done gin y’u nothin’ tuh fill y’r stomach.”

“Bub, y’u hush y’r mouth an’ stop talkin’ ’bout Sis, she’ll do like I did an’ all th’ women in this country, when th’ time cums,—jest go tuh some cabin ’ith her man an’ get through life as it cums tuh her an’ hern. I’ll talk tuh her when she gits ready hersel’ tuh talk.”

Sis became less animated and cheerful in spirit, although she still went about her work with energy and perseverance. Her mother saw this and felt that it meant much for her and “her gal,” whom she saw to be every day more and more like her father.

At last, one morning at the spring, Sis said, “Mam, I wants tuh ast y’u somethin’ ’bout whut I wants to do.

Y'u heard that preacher say he wanted me tuh cum to the Court House tuh school, an' somebody in New York hed sent him money tuh pay fer me ef I'd go. I wants tuh go, but I wants Elder an' Uncle Harve tuh take whut's mine, what dad lef' me, an' pay fer me. I kin teach school after I'm done at the Court House, an' won't want th' lan' an' money."

"Whar y'u goin' tuh live, y'u ninny, ef y'u hain't got no lan' tuh live on when y'u cums back home. Y'u jest hain't goin' one step arter sich nonsense. Over thar on th' spur o' thet mount'n's y'r dad laid out, wuz th' place fer y'r cabin, an' thar's whar it 'll be, an' y'u'll be jest like I bin an' all on us women-folks."

"Mam, I hain't aimin' tuh make y'u mad, but *I'm goin'*.

"I'll stay heye'h 'til I'm free, an' whut's mine's mine tuh use, an' then I'm a-goin', and ef y'u treat me like y'u talk on, I'll nuver cum back, even ef I dies from heart-break. Let's go an' see th' Elder an' ast him 'bout it."

Mrs. Finley agreed to the proposal, sure that the opinion of the Elder would be her own, and also that he would have more influence with Sis than anyone else.

So a few days later Mrs. Finley mounted her horse and, taking Ruth up behind her, rode over to the Elder's farm. When they had dismounted and made their desire known, the old cow's horn, which had done duty for more than a hundred years in the family, was blown by the Elder's daughter, and the Elder, hearing his pe-

culiar call, came in from the field where he was at work.

“Howdy, sister Finley an’ Sis. I’m mighty glad tuh see y’u. Hope y’u air all well at y’r house,” was his warm-hearted salutation, as he seated himself.

When told of what Sis desired to do, he was taken altogether by surprise. It had never occurred to him that any girl in his flock would ever dream of going away from home to school. He was entirely honest in his conviction that the schools, in little log-cabins, where Webster’s blue-backed spelling-book was the main textbook, gave all the opportunities for education that any boy or girl in the mountains could wish for or require.

He himself did not feel any want of knowledge in the undertaking or carrying out of what came to him as a business man, school trustee, or preacher. Deferred to by the people in all his opinions and teachings, he was ready to measure himself with any man on the earth and meet him in any tussle of strength, be it intellectual, physical, or spiritual.

In going to his New Testament, he was certain that he was taught of the Spirit, and he spake with full confidence in the importance and truth of all he said.

His assurance received a jar that his ward, who was a favourite among the “ewe lambs of his fold,” had concluded that, as teacher, friend, or father in spirit, he was not enough to satisfy her.

He had picked out Sis for the wife of his nephew,

whom he expected to become a preacher, and keep the true seed of the everlasting covenant in Salem Church. The nephew was of like mind with his uncle in this matter, and was "head over heels" in love with the girl. He had been disappointed in not receiving a particle of encouragement from her, and had but a short time before confided his trouble to his uncle, with the result of being assured of the sympathy and co-operation he needed, and of having his hopes of final success much raised.

The old Elder thought of his nephew in a moment, and of his chagrin at Sis so much as thinking of such a thing. Then his plan was to have Sis and his nephew married in a year or two. Nevertheless, with all the troublesome questions coming out of what he was now to face, with his natural prejudices aroused and his self-conceit pricked in a tender and fatal spot, he was a true and brave man, and he did not deliver his mind with his wonted dogmatic positiveness.

If he did not know his danger, he felt it, and if he did not fear the face of man, he was tender in every throb of his heart for Pete Finley's gal, and would not wantonly hurt her.

"Why, Sis, hain't learnin' whut's good 'nough fer yer dad an' mam an' fer me, good 'nough fer y'u. Mighty leetle'll do ef y'u puts it tuh good use, an' a heap's no use ef y'u hain't got nothin' tuh do with it an' no place tuh work it in. Tuh gin away lan' an' all th' money y'u got tuh set up housekeepin' 'ith when y'u gits married, fer

nothin' y'u can eat nur w'ar an' put tuh any kin' o' use heyeh, is bad, very bad. Y'u mus' do as y'r mam an' Uncle Harve an' y'r father in the spirit says in this, Sis: jest git married an' 'live on y'r lan' like all on us folks heyeh."

Sis had hoped against hope in coming to see this old man, in whom she believed with all the force of her intense nature. Now, when she found that she was to have his opposition, her heart was shaken for the first time, and for a moment she hesitated. Then, as the waves hurled back in fury from the rocks come in with increasing volume, until they overwhelm their foes, the rocks, so her resolution came to her after the fluctuation, stronger and firmer than ever.

"Elder, I jest hez tuh go. Thar's somethin' in me whut's all th' time a-callin' me, an' I got tuh listen tuh that call, an' I hez tuh go—that's plumb shore. Y'u says tuh us when y'u preaches, a'most every sarment, that th' spirit's teachin' us an' by callin' us it's meant by God we sh'll do whut He tells us tuh. Y'u says y'u're tol' whut tuh tell us, an' we believes y'u an' trys tuh do like y'u says. I air tol' by whut's in me tuh go, an' go I hez tuh, even ef it's me dyin' fer it."

Her statement and the manner of it, completely confounded the Elder. To be taken at his word, and to have his teachings thrown back in his face and made to contradict his advice and destroy his plans, was never so done before. Resistance had a tendency to anger him,

as with most strong persons, and turning his guns of argument and teaching upon him after that manner, confounded him for a time. He did not speak nor act violently, as he felt like doing, however, but took the opposite course, and said:

"Let's think a while 'bout what's bes'. I don't see no good tuh cum o' y'u stayin' on fer years jest waitin' fer this thin', an' then when y'u air an ol' maid, a-goin' off tuh school an' spendin' all y'r got an' goin' 'roun' all y'r life a teachin' an' no family an' sich. Y'u jest goes home, an' I'll cum over an' see y'u soon, an' talk some more 'bout it all."

Thus dismissed, the two women took their departure. Ruth was not a quarrelsome woman, and, when not silent, spoke of other things on the way home.

In some way, which she could no more understand than we can, Mrs. Finley felt that Ruth had gained the Elder and that he would at last consent to her wishes. Not that he would give up his opinions of what was of value in this world, or cease to feel the sufficiency of what he possessed for all the purposes and pursuits of his life, but that he would yield to the force of his own teachings, aided as they were by his natural wish to let Ruth have her own way.

Mrs. Finley's feelings were confirmed when the old man, a few days later, came with Uncle Harve and after considerable discussion delivered his judgment thus. "Bein' as Sis air so sot in her ways 'bout goin' tuh th'

Cou’t House an’ feels such an in’ard call tuh go, Uncle Harve an’ me hev made up our min’s tuh let her go.”

Mrs. Finley put her apron over her head and, without speaking a word, walked out of the house.

Ruth was for some time not disposed to say anything, as the mingling of joy and surprise, and the coming of a sense of responsibility which was new to her, held her facing the future, while feelings of awe, if not of dread, filled her heart.

Uncle Harve was the first to speak: “Ef I’m a-livin’ when y’u comes back ’thout any money ur lan’, Sis, y’u’ll see that Pete Finley’s gal kin hev her share o’ all I got in my cabin, an’ I’ll be as good tuh y’u in all y’r book larnin’ as I am right this heyer minit.” The voice of the old man quavered. The Elder had hopes that a week or two would be all that Ruth would want of the school, as he knew how home-sickness worked upon the mountain people, and so he said:

“I’ll cum tuh th’ Cou’t House tuh see y’u, Sis, in a week ur two arter y’u gits thar, an’ fin’ out how y’u likes it, an’ y’u kin cum ’long back ’ith me ef y’u wants to.”

It seemed to the honest old soul that the girl was casting off all her best and most holy possessions and going into an unknown wilderness of embarrassment and temptation. Nothing but conviction that the inward voice of God should be heeded and followed, brought him to speak the words and use the influence which opened to this seeker for light the gate to the sun of her hopes.



## XXII

### IN THE THROES OF CIVILISATION

**T**HE triumph over opposition and the realisation of a purpose did not give Ruth the gratification she expected. Dread of consequences and distrust of herself were, where she had hoped for the stimulus of those qualities of mind, now free to exercise themselves in what, through development, gave exhilaration to the ambitious soul.

She had never been away from home, except when on her visit to Yellowboro, and when she saw Bub put up the bars and then mount his horse to go with her to the Court House, and looked through misty eyes at the dilapidated old cabin on the mountain side where she was born, and noted that no one was in sight, which she knew was because they could not bear to see her go, she had the impulse to turn back and welcome ignorance, toil, and poverty, as blessings compared with the pain at parting from her well-loved home ones.

Every sight and sound was not only a voice recalling days which were to come no more, and with what was told by them, giving a pathos which none but true hearts can feel, and those who have great deeps in them can measure. But to the freshly opened heart of the pure

and loving maiden, there came the vision of a manly form and a face brave and strong; and for love of that man, whose image was now before her, she girded her strength to make herself worthy of him.

She did not add to her troubles by seeking to know when or how or where this would take place, she only felt that it would be some day, and she was determined to be ready when the time came.

Within a mile of home she passed the log cabin where she had been taught from the "blue-backed" spelling-book, and thought that there were no better schools than that one; and, even now, as she could hear the hum of the children's voices as they "studied out," and as she passed the door could see them seated on the logs fastened to the walls of the room, she had a startled sense of what she was doing, and wondered if it meant leaving the customs and opinions and what was life to her people.

"Sis, why hain't y'u a-sayin' somethin'?" Bub remarked, with a touch of irritation in his tones. "Y'u jest bin mopin' all th' mornin'. I wants somebody tuh talk tuh."

"I don't feel as ef I wants tuh talk, Bub; I'm a-thinkin'."

"Wall, y'u're doin' whut y'u air sot on, an' now y'u look like y'u wish y'u hedn't gone an' done it. 'Tain't nigh as fer back home as tuh th' Cou't House, an' th' way hain't blocked up yit, I reckon."

"Bub, don't talk so, honey. Sis am a-goin' on tuh th' en' ef her heart air sore."

Bub tried to laugh, but found he could not do it, and so he remarked in as cheerful tone as his voice could assume: "This air Black Mount'in, Sis, we air goin' up, an' when we gits over it, we'll be tuh th' crick whut we'll foller cl'ar up tuh th' Cou't House."

Sis would not talk to him, and he fell to wondering at many things, and at Sis in particular, until he saw the Court House dome in the distance, and cried out, "Thar, Sis, am th' Cou't House, whar we air goin'."

Ruth looked, but what she saw was like a dream. She tried to pick out the school-house, but could not find anything to fit her expectations.

When they had forded the creek, which was wide and rocky, and had entered the town, Bub asked someone the way to the Mission school-house.

"Jest go 'roun' that 'ar corner tuh th' right han', an' then 'round another corner tuh th' lef' han', an' when y'u cum tuh a great big white house, 'ith green window blin's, y'u'll be thar," said the man Bub asked.

The shy mountain girl and boy dismounted, and taking the old and much worn carpet-bag, which was made so as to hang upon the horn of the side-saddle, upon which Sis rode, and which contained all the effects she had brought with her, they knocked at the door.

A sweet-faced woman admitted the half-frightened pair and, introducing herself as Miss Camp, explained

that she was the principal, and, before they knew it, had made them forget their strangeness. Rude as their life had been they knew true hospitality, and, recognising it here, their fears lessened.

Bub, now that he had found the school, was anxious to start back for home without as much as being seated. He had to lead the horse Sis had ridden, and he wanted to be at his place before dark. But, ready as he was to meet without fear man or beast with his father's rifle in hand, he did not want to leave Sis. There was a choking in his throat whenever he thought of it.

Miss Camp saw through him, and was not going to let him leave until she had given him something to think of and to talk to his mother about.

"Miss Finley, let me show you to your room, and we will ask your brother to bring the bag and come with us."

Sis was startled at the new title. She had never been so called, as Mr. Keith and others had gone no further than to address her as "Miss Ruth." Bub had no wish to accompany them, but the lady had such a gentle compelling way, that he went with them obediently, if not joyfully.

They were shown into a room, fifteen feet square, upon the floor of which was a clean rag-carpet. There was a neat suit of oak furniture of three pieces, and the bed was covered with a clean white counterpane. Upon the washstand were bowl and pitcher, and other necessities for the morning ablutions.

Bub was so put out by what he saw, that he stood holding the bag, and gazing around without a word. There he took his second lesson in civilisation, though he knew it not—a lesson which, with an accumulating force, was to lead to a work of changing men and customs, and to gather to it a leadership which was, with its following, to redeem his section from many of the worst features of the life there.

"I wish you, Mr. Finley, to be able to tell your mother how Miss Finley is situated," Miss Camp said, "and what a pretty room she has. The young lady who is to be her room-mate has not arrived, but we expect her in a few days."

Ruth was in a new world, and was in no haste as yet to get its metes and bounds. Strong natures are not quick to speak of what astonishes them, and though she wondered how she was to get on among so many grand things, she waited to get the true idea of them to apply and enjoy them.

Bub would only wait a few moments, and Miss Camp was too politic to try to detain him longer, or to go to the front gate and see the brother and sister part. They did not shake hands, nor kiss, as is the custom among most people. When Bub had mounted his horse and Ruth had unhitched the other one and handed him the bridle-rein, she simply said, "Good-bye, honey!"

He tried to speak, but his voice would not respond to his will, and he could not utter a sound. It is deep feeling,

stronger than death, which makes the ordinary clatter of of so-called polished persons an impertinent exhibition of shallowness.

Bub never looked back, and left the horses to take their own way towards home, for he could not see to guide them.

When Ruth saw the old horses—each one having been given a little farewell pat upon the nose in parting—go with Bub out of sight around the corner, she turned back, feeling that the last cord had been broken which bound her to her former life. She was henceforth to live in what was yet to be discovered, and, with emotions of which she knew neither the nature nor the strength, went on to meet and triumph in many a field of effort and discipline into which she was now to enter.

“ You had better go to your room until I call you, Miss Finley,” the kindly Miss Camp said to her, when she returned to the house.

Ruth was grateful for this permission to be away from the gaze of strangers, for she was where many tides meet, and where souls who are to endure and triumph are tossed and whirled in their embrace.

The desks and other appliances of the school-room were a hindrance for a time, while the food was not to her liking. She saw so much in her clothing unlike that which the teachers and older pupils wore, that she was uncomfortable when she either looked at or thought of herself.

The home-sick feeling, which all true natures feel when forced to dwell for a time away from loved ones and familiar objects, and which no philosopher has been able to analyse or physician successfully to cure, had her in its relentless hold, and refused to yield to her prayers and tears.

At times she was tempted to run back on foot over the rough way, and cast herself into her mother's arms and give up the battle for her heart's ideal; but when there seemed nothing left to support her there came to her what she most needed in the teachings of the old Elder, that God would lead His own, and that to trust Him was in itself the greatest victory.

The Elder, at the close of the following week, when on his way to his "appointment," called to see her, and confidently expected, when he told her that he would pass through on the next Monday on his way home, that she would ask to go with him.

She was very glad to see him, and the temptation to ask him to take her home came several times while he was there, but she was learning to conquer herself—the first and best step towards conquering all other things—and surprised the Elder, as well as herself, by saying that she was getting on well, and intended to stay until Christmas before going home.

"This heyeh's whut they calls a college ur high-school, hain't it?" he asked Miss Camp and Miss Bell, the ladies in charge, who were as anxious to see a genuine speci-

men of a primitive Baptist preacher, as the preacher was to see a college or high-school.

"Yes, sir; and we would be glad to show you through the school-building, if you do not object," the ladies replied. "This is our school-room, where the pupils study and recite their lessons," was remarked when the preacher was ushered into the room. The blackboards first attracted his attention, and when he saw some girls writing upon them with chalk, he was so confounded that he stopped and asked,

"Whut's them air gals a-doin' of?"

"One is copying a language lesson, and the others are working their problems in algebra."

"Whut's them things y'u said? They hain't a-goin' tuh help 'em do thar work tuh home any better, is they?"

"Whatever educates the mind ought to help all of us to do better work, wherever we live," answered Miss Camp.

"I hez lived in these heyeh mount'ins a good many yeahs, an' I nuver hed no use fer no sich thin's as them gals hez on them boards. Is them th' thin's y'u air a-goin' tuh larn tuh our Sis, heyeh?"

"We hope to have her do the same work as the others, as soon as she is able."

In order to entertain him and turn his thoughts in another direction, Miss Camp called his attention to a globe which had recently been sent from New York.

"Whut's that fer?" he asked.



"It is to show how the earth turns on its axis, and also to show its true shape, and, indeed, all its movements."

"Yearth turnin', an' like that roun' thin' thar, 's whut y'u say? Wall, I nuver heard th' like o' that sence I was borned into this life. Th' yearth hain't like that 'ar ball no sich thin', an' it don't turn one bit, nuther. It's still, as we knows at this minit. I hez bin heyeh too long an' seen too much tuh be fooled like that."

"What of the night and day coming and going, if the earth does not turn, Elder?" Miss Camp asked gently.

"Why, th' sun jest moves; hit raises up in the mornin' an' hit sots at night, but th' yearth hit don't move."

Miss Camp changed the subject, and showed him the desks, the bell, and other furnishings, and with great tact avoided any further explanations and remarks about the uses of the school-appliances.

He also saw Ruth's room, and was so impressed by it—plain as it was—that he told in his next "sarment" at Salem Meeting House, that he could not believe his own eyes when he saw it all, an' he didn't see how Sis Finley was a-goin' tuh sleep in sich a fine place 'ithout a-losin' her senses a-thinkin' she wuz better 'an anybody else; an' as fer them 'omens, whar was at th' head o' that 'ar place, they jest opened thar heads an' tol' him up plumb 'bout th' yearth a-goin' 'roun', an' bein' like a ball,—as ef they knowed more than all on us.

"Now, bretherun, ef 'omens air tuh do sich things as that cums tuh, we am got to pray more than we hev bin

a-doin' 'roun' heyeh, ur God is a-goin' tuh forsake us sure, an' han' us over tuh our enemies fer our destruction."

During court week, when some important cases relating to land titles were being heard, Keith, who had been employed as counsel for the "native" owners, whom the speculators were trying to defraud of their rights, called one evening and presented a letter of introduction to Miss Camp from Mr. Gordon. He was gladly received, and when he asked to see Miss Finley, was accorded that privilege.

Ruth was "taken aback" when she heard that he was in the reception-room and desired to see her. Her wild heart bounded with the thought that he had come for her, but life-long repression did not forsake her now, though she was so excited that she was alarmed lest she might show it.

"I am very glad to see you, Miss Finley,"—he had taken his cue from hearing her spoken of by Miss Camp in that way,—“and to see you really settled in school and under such teachers.”

Ruth was paid for all she had suffered in thought and feeling, and a wave of joy swept over her that he approved of her being where she was.

There were many subjects of conversation between the two, but most of what was said was about Yellowboro and the Gordons. Mr. Gordon's persecutions were now very

great, because of his stand in relation to the lynching, and Keith was so full of the subject, in his admiration for his minister and his wife, that he never tired of talking of them.

Although he did not tell Ruth of it, Keith had come in for his share in the minister's troubles, as he was with him in everything he said and did in this matter.

Ruth was alarmed at the peril of her friends, and asked, "Do y'u think they'll hurt Mr. Gordon, an' don't y'u think he said too much?"

"No, they are in great dread themselves from "the natives," and will not risk another outrage. The mountain people have no idea of doing them harm, but they are so cowardly that they are afraid to go out after dark, even to church, and it is surprising what a change we see on the streets. As to him speaking too freely, I am proud of a man who dares to stand for the right with two or three. I believe if men generally were like our minister, Yellowboro would be a different place."

"Did they fin' out who shot Ham Simms, an' who th' men wuz whut lynched Clem Jones?" Sis asked.

"The general opinion is that the man who sold the moonshine that morning to Ham was the man who shot him, but there is no clue, which is spoken of, as to who that man was. A day or two before I left, it was becoming known that Clem was one of the Mack party in the feud, and that he had fled when the feud was settled; but the knowledge is kept very close."

"Hev y'u ever heard Uncle Harve talked of when they says anythin' 'bout it?" Sis inquired.

"His name has never been mentioned, to my knowledge, in connection with it," Keith replied.

At parting, as Keith was to return to Yellowboro the next day, he went as far as he thought prudent in urging Ruth to go through the school and master every study given her. He added, that as his successes in the cases just closed had brought him several more, he would be up for the next court, and also the one following, and would call and see how she was getting on.

Ruth, stirred at seeing him, and by his very marked interest in her education seemed like a new creature. It was beautiful and pathetic to see this magnificent girl rise to the call of her heart, and make her body and mind obedient to its notes of sublime exaltation.

Going to church was at first a great trial to the girl. She was too old and grown up for the ordinary classes in the Sunday-school, and so Miss Camp took her with the other girls in her Bible class. She could not find the places nor understand the many references made by her teacher to the most common incidents in the Scriptures, and her mortification was for a time extreme.

This she endured for two or three Sundays, and then she went to Miss Camp and told her about it, and asked for a Bible, saying she would stay away from class for a few weeks and would master these things and then return and profit by what was taught.

Miss Camp at once told her not to stay away, and that night, after study-hour, she took Ruth into her room, and, giving her a Bible, spent an hour showing her what was mechanical about it, and how to get at its teachings.

Ruth was told but once, and for the remainder of the week much of her spare time was given to her new treasure, so that when the Sabbath came again, she was free from her mortification, and entered into what was new and delightful to her—the study of the Word of God.

She missed the simplicity, directness, and earnestness of old Elder Morgan's preaching, and, truth to tell, his peculiar "ou, ou ah," and the manner in which he emphasised his teachings. The minister she now listened to used so many words she could not understand, and was so precise and dull in his delivery, that she could only follow him by standing at the line of the great chasm of thought dug for her in his unintelligible words, and wait for him to come back to her and give her a crumb which had fallen from the children's table—that is, as if the great philosophers and divine, who were not present, were the children.

But the music was her delight. Miss Bell directed the singing, using Gospel Hymns in a way which reached her heart, and caused her to see her Saviour as never before.

When Mr. Gordon came to hold a two-days' meeting, and told the truth in simple speech and in clear state-

ments, such as Jesus used, pressing all home by an earnestness which was contagious, and with a tenderness that caused the hearts of his hearers to be moved, as was his own, by the great love of God in giving His only Son to die for the sins of the world, Ruth was greatly moved. Although she made no outward sign of her emotion, she spent much of the night in deep thought, and in the early morning she awoke her room-mate, a sincere, simple-hearted Christian girl, and told her that she had entered a new world and was as much surprised as rejoiced at what she saw and felt.

As soon as Miss Camp was heard moving in her room, these girls went to her, and Ruth told her what had come to her in the night, and thus Miss Camp gained her first convert from among the feud element of the mountain people.

## XXIII

### THE MOONSHINERS

**C**OLONEL PERRY, the United States Marshal for Kentucky, had sent his deputies in different divisions to arrest the moonshiners in the region about Smith's Court House. He himself had gone alone to attend to some business which needed his personal attention in the neighbourhood of Uncle Harve's cabin.

He had been in that vicinity so many times that he was very well known, and had been in the habit of spending the night with the son of Uncle Harve, who lived in a better house, and on a better farm, than any other in the region. He was always given a welcome, and his men and horses, as well as himself, were furnished with everything they needed.

The Colonel had not the least suspicion that his host was in any way connected with the moonshine business, either in making or selling. He had at times seen some of the class of mountain men who were engaged in the trade around the place, but believed that they were workmen upon the farm, or else, as was told him, cutting timber and preparing it for the spring freshets, when it would be rafted down the river.

His host never showed any fear or nervousness when he was at the house. He would not talk about his purpose in being in the mountains, nor give him information in regard to the doings of the people; but that was the uniform custom of everyone throughout the country, and aroused no suspicion in the Colonel's mind.

That night he thought he saw a slight difference in the cordiality of his host, but dismissed the bad impressions as being unjust and unfounded.

The fact was, that he had come upon a night when a number of barrels of the moonshine had to be moved, to meet a contract in the blue-grass region, and as his host was the largest dealer in the spirit in that county, not only in making it himself, but buying it from the men who had small stills further back from the roads, his coming gave the moonshiner the alternative of either breaking his word to the men, who were coming a long distance to get what they had bought, or of circumventing the United States Marshal.

There was a fierce debate among the moonshiners as to whether it was better to kill the Colonel, now that he was in their power, and be done with the matter, or to run the risk of having his suspicions aroused, so as to bring him back in a few days to raid the premises, and put them in prison for a term of years.

It was determined to try and move out the whiskey as they had intended, and if they were convinced that



the Colonel had become suspicious of them, to take him up upon the rocks and kill him. The wagons came on from Lexington as was expected, and were loaded between midnight and dawn, and but for an accident there would have been no fear of the Colonel being in any way aroused. But in careless handling, by a man who had indulged too freely in the moonshine, a barrel slipped from the plank which was being used for a skid, and, rolling down over the rocks, was broken so as to let all the whiskey escape.

It was clear, then, that when the Marshal got up in the morning and took his walk to the stable to see after his horse, he would smell the whiskey which had soaked into the ground and that was enough evidence for him to bring his men and search the premises.

When Colonel Perry went to his breakfast,—having over-slept himself he had not gone to see to his horse,—he left his pistols hanging in his belt upon a chair by the side of the bed upon which he had slept. If he had gone to the stable and detected the odour of the whiskey, he would have been very careful to have had them with him, for they were his only hope of escape.

Now, cheerful and bright, and with his usual courtesy addressing his hostess in complimentary terms, he took his seat and began to help himself to what the table offered.

Suddenly, without the least warning, the doors of the room were filled with men armed with Winchesters,

which were pointed at him, and the order was given in harsh, peremptory tones, "Hold up y'r han's, or y'u're a dead man."

The Colonel deliberately pushed back his chair and said, "I have no arms, you can see them in the room where I spent the night, and there is no use for me to hold up my hands. Shoot as quickly as you please."

He rose and stood so as to face both doors as nearly as possible and gave himself up as a dead man. While several men covered him with guns, others came and bound his hands behind his back, saying: "We don't want tuh kill y'u in th' house, but we'll take y'u back in th' mount'ins a piece."

"Just as you please, gentlemen," the Colonel said. "I am altogether at your service."

When he was bound, his hat was brought to him and put upon his head, and he was led out of the house and up the mountains. After a walk of over a half-hour, he was brought to a glade and put with his back against a pine tree, and securely bound to it, his hands having been released.

His host then came forward and told him that if he had not known before, that they were making and selling whiskey, that it would be impossible for him to leave the place that morning without knowing it, therefore the men had in council determined that the only thing left for them to do was to kill him, and, as "dead men tell no

tales," he could neither tell on them or come after them with his deputies.

"Y'u kin hev ten minutes fer prayin' ur fer anythin' y'u wants afore them men shoot y'u," were the words with which this speech concluded.

No braver man ever trod the soil of Kentucky than Colonel Perry, and now that he was certain that in a very few minutes he was to meet God, he did not quail. He took off his watch, which was a fine one, and given him as a token of esteem by the men in his office, and handing it to his host, told him to send it in some way to his wife, and asked for a piece of paper and a pencil that he might write a note to go with it.

This request disturbed the men, as they had neither paper or pencil and they did not want to go to the house to get them from the Colonel's saddle-bags, where he told them they could be found.

After some conference among the would-be murderers, the host said that a man would be sent to his father's cabin, which was very near where they were, and if paper could be found there, his request would be granted, only he must be careful what he wrote.

It was not long until the messengers returned, accompanied by Uncle Harve, with a page torn from an old copy-book and a short pencil.

Uncle Harve was greatly moved by what he had been told as well as by what he now saw. He demanded to see his son, and two or three of the men in private, that

they might lay the whole case before him. After they had gone behind the rocks, the Colonel was given the paper and pencil and wrote:

*"Dearest:* I am to die in a few moments in the discharge of my duty. I am as highly honoured by this as if I fell upon the field of battle, when the fight was in all its fury. I have no fear, because I trust in Him who has been the strength of my heart ever since you knew me, Jesus Christ, my living Lord. I am sorry that I could not provide more amply for you and our children, but God is your friend, and He is always more than husband and father to those who trust Him. Kiss our children for me every day and remember to tell them that the name they bear has never been dishonoured by cowardice, and they must bear it as all their fathers have done. With all the love I can hold within my being, I love you, my dearest.

"J. M. PERRY."

While this note was being written, there was a sharp debate among the rocks back of him. He could hear the sound of the voices, but could not distinguish the words. The principal speaker in this debate was Uncle Harve, who was saying, in his usual vehement way:

"Ye air goin' tuh ruin y'uselves an' all this county ef y'u shoot that man.

"How kin y'u keep it from bein' foun' out? His men

'll be heyeh 'fore th' sun goes down a-huntin' uv him, an' when they don't fin' him, they'll sarch all th' region like huntin' fer a needle in a hay-stack. If y'u fight 'em an' kill 'em, as ye may, that 'll only bring more on 'em, an', let me tell y'u, th' army o' th' United States air too much fer all th' men in these mount'ins. Ye hed better go an' cut them ropes an' tell him ye all surrenders tuh him, an' that y'u'll niver hev anythin' tuh do 'ith anuther drap o' moonshine so long as ye live.

"Ef y'u kills him, ye'll hev to gin it up an' either git killed, ur spen' all y'r lives in jail, an' so th' better way's to gin it all up now, an' make th' bes' barg'in y'u kin 'ith him. Hit were th' bigges' fool' trick I uver hearn tell on to let them folks cum heyeh las' night. Ye ought ter stopped 'em, ef y'u niver sold 'em any more, long as y'u live."

This speech unsettled many of the men, and, at the suggestion of one of them, it was agreed that the proposition be made to the Colonel, that if he would promise upon the honour of a man to go home and not speak of what had happened to anyone, and so bring them into trouble, that he would be released, given his property, and sent on his way.

When Colonel Perry was told of this, there was a moment of temptation, as love of life and of wife and children clamoured for him to accept it. He thought, "I can surely not be considered wrong in getting away and then refusing to keep faith with such outlaws." He only

struggled for a moment with himself, and then his reply was this :

"I cannot, as an officer of the Government, promise what you ask. My sworn duty is to hunt down and arrest such men as you are, as violators of the law, and I will never go back on my oath under any circumstances. If I gave you my word, I would keep it, and, knowing myself to be a dishonoured man, I could not respect myself, and my condition would be worse than death."

"Then time's up, but ef y'u wants tuh pray, y'u kin hev two minits afore y'u die," the leader said.

With an old bull's eye watch in hand, this man stood while five others, their Winchesters cocked, stood in a line about ten paces from the bound and helpless prisoner.

The Colonel closed his eyes and his lips moved, though no sound came from them.

When the two minutes were up, the leader put his watch in his pocket and stepped aside saying, "When I drops my hat, all on y'u fire an' aim fer his heart so's tuh kill him at onct."

He took off his hat and held it in his hand, while the five executioners watched him in breathless expectation. "One, two, three," the man counted slowly and in firm voice, when, like a wild-cat from the mountains, Uncle Harve sprang before them, rushed to the bound man, and exclaimed :

"Shoot me, too. I'd ruther die 'ith him now, than tuh

be hunted tuh death like a wil' beas' by men who wears th' same uniform I wore fer four long years, an' see any o' me family in prison ur starvin' tuh death."

The guns were slowly lowered while every eye was fastened upon the man who thus risked his life for another.

"I'll tell on ye shore as ye're born, ef y'u kills this man," cried the old man. "Now untie him an' let him go."

The host stepped forward, with his hat in his hand, which he threw on the ground at Colonel Perry's feet, and, drawing his knife, he cut his bonds and said: "Y'u heard whut th' ol' man said; y'u kin go."

The Colonel when he realised that he was actually free to return to his home and that instead of sending a note, he was to see his loved ones again, felt a faintness come over him, and for a few minutes he could see nothing.

Thus it often happens with the strong and the brave. Prepared for death, and braced to meet its consequences, trusting in God and having no thought of fear, his principles bore the shock with great calmness; but the revulsion was too much for his nerves, and the heart almost stopped beating, when love spoke to it and hope pointed the way to joys now evermore to be more tense and soul-inspiring because so nearly lost.

When he recovered sufficiently to go on towards the house, Uncle Harve, with his son and several of the men, surrounded and went with him. After he mounted his

horse, the old man and his son also mounted horses and continued in his company.

"You need not come with me, as I know the road very well," the Colonel said.

"It's tuh keep some o' them men frum shootin' o' y'u frum behin' th' rocks," was the reply. "They're mighty sullen, an' ef we hain't heyeh they moight gin y'u y'r dose."

"Uncle Harve," quietly remarked Colonel Perry, "don't you think you had better quit this bad business, and turn over a new leaf and lead a new life? I will do everything I can to help you with the Government, so you will have as little trouble as possible."

"I don't think it's wrong, or I'd niver toch it 'ith th' tip o' my leetle finger," Uncle Harve answered. "We plants th' co'n an' ploughs it, an' when we pulls it an' puts it in our cribs, it's ourn, an' no gover'ment nur anythin' nur anybody else hez any right tuh one grain on it.

"We kin grin' it fer bread ur feed it fer pork ur gin it fer feed to our hosses ur cattle, an' no gover'ment hez anythin' tuh say ur do 'bout it, but ef we makes a mash on it, an' runs it through a crooked tube an' gits th' sperits out o' it an' then drinks a drap on it ur gives some on it tuh a frien', ur even hev it in our house 'ithout usin' on it, y'u comes down on us an' burns an' breaks up our thin's an' drags us off from home in chains, an' puts us in jail, sometimes fer years.



"We hain't done nothin' mean, we jest doin' whut we hev a right tuh do, an' it's nobody's consarn but ourn. Let th' gover'ment we fought an' shed our blood fer let us 'lone, an' we'll tend tuh our own bizness."

At these words, the old man put his hand to his breast and said, "He'yeh's whar th' bay'net struck me when I were in that charge 'ith th' ol' Elder at Perryville, an' this arm," holding up his arm; "y'u'll see's crooked 'cause a bullet broke it down in North Carliny, when I were in at th' las' battle 'ith Uncle Billy Sherman."

"Don't I love this country, an' hain't I willin' tuh die fer it? Let th' men who knows me tell y'u. Hev I tuh he hunted frum rock tuh rock jest 'cause I wants tuh do as I please 'ith me own? No, I won't be no slave in me own country an' on me own lan' tuh a gover'ment I'd give me life fer."

The Colonel was not prepared to hear such a defence. It gave him a different point of view from that which he had had hitherto. His only thought was that these moon-shiners had no excuse for violating the laws of the land and becoming what he was pleased to call outlaws. He felt he must make some reply to the old man and said: "You know that the government cannot be run without a large amount of money and that it has the right to put taxes upon whatever it wishes. Whiskey is an evil and ruins so many persons that we cannot count them. It is not good policy to have it cheap and plentiful, and for this reason the government puts a tax upon it for the

double purpose of making it more difficult and expensive to get, and of bringing a large sum of money into its treasury.

"To get this money, there must be men to measure the whiskey and collect the taxes due. If you are allowed to make whiskey on your land in secret, and sell it when and where you will, all others must be given the same privilege, or the government will be unjust, and so would lose its right to exist.

"You can make all the whiskey you want to make, if you will do it openly and pay the taxes on it."

"But we can't pay th' taxes, an' we bin havin' whiskey whun we wants it all our lives, an' our preachers drinks it 'ith us, an' teaches us that it hain't wrong. Our Elder calls it one o' God's good critters, an' that th' 'postle Paul says all such am good to use. Y'r talk may do fer whar y'r cum frum, but we can't do 'ithout whiskey, an' th' way y'u air doin' takes every drap on it frum us."

"But why do you sell? Your son here, I find, is in the business of shipping it down into our county."

"Jest becose we mought as well be hung fer a sheep as a lamb. Ef y'u'd let us 'lone, we wouldn't sell a drap 'cept tuh our neighbours, but y'u won't do that, an' hunts us all y'u kin, so we mought jest as well all make all we kin an' sell it tuh th' ones whut 'll buy it. It makes it no worse fer us tuh hev a barrel then a cupful."

The men had now reached a point where it was safe for the Colonel to go on alone, and they stopped to take

leave of him. The Colonel extended his hand to Uncle Harve and said with great feeling: "I thank you for saving my life, for I would have been dead in two seconds if you had not interfered. Do come with me and let me fix this matter up for you so that you can go home and live the remainder of your life in peace. My wife will be very glad to see you, and have you at our house, and we will do everything in our power to help you and *all* whom you love."

"No, I'll nuver leave these mount'ins on sich an erran'. I bin 'ith me people in this thin', an' don't feel it's wrong, an' I won't take whut they can't git jest th' same as me."

As he said this, the old man grew straighter and seemed to shed a light from his weather-beaten face as he took the Colonel's hand, and said good-bye after the manner of the people of the mountains.

When the father and son turned back and left him, the Colonel looked over his shoulder at them as he rode on as long as he could see them, and wondered what he could do to help them.

## XXIV

### THE RAID

**T**HE impulse of the Marshal was to gather his men at once and go down upon the distillery he had accidentally discovered, but when he reached the Court House, he fell in a fever and was compelled to lie in bed for weeks.

When able to be taken to Louisville, he sent for the Assistant Marshal and told him what he had endured, and what information had come to him, and asked him to act for him during his illness and do what was needed to be done as soon as possible.

This assistant had been a colonel in the United States army, and while he did not like the idea of catching and sending to prison men who fought as he did, yet collected a large number of deputies and set off for the mountains.

When they reached a place ten miles from where they knew the mountaineers had the still, they stopped, as night had come on, and rested themselves and their horses, at the same time taking food.

It required three hours or more to reach the place, as the roads were very rocky, and in many places steep.

When within a mile of the house, they dismounted, and, leaving a guard with their horses, proceeded slowly and with great caution to surround the house.

After they had every way of escape, as they supposed, closed, the commander rapped upon the door with the butt of his pistol and demanded to have it opened in the name and by the authority of the government of the United States.

There was no answer, and, rapping again and again, and no sound being heard, he at least said, in a loud and peremptory voice: "If this door is not opened, we will break it down."

A woman's voice then answered, "There hain't no men in th' house, an' y'u hed better go 'way an' leave us alone."

"Open the door, for we must see for ourselves," the officer demanded.

Then someone was heard moving within, and a faint light was soon seen gleaming. The bar across the door was taken out and the door opened. A woman, fully dressed, was standing there with a small iron lamp in her hand.

"Where are the men of the house?" was the next question of the commander.

"I tol' y'u they hain't heyeh, an' I don't know behin' whut rock ur tree they're now a-waitin' fer y'u."

This remark did not comfort the officer and his men who had heard it, but as he was not seeking for com-

fort, but trying to perform his duty, he called to some of the men and proceeded to search the house.

There was no sign of the moonshiners, and not a gun or a particle of ammunition was to be found. In the cabin there were two women and a number of children, but nothing from which they could get the least clue to what was their purpose in coming. It was far too dangerous to search in the rocks and woods for the still, or for the men whom they had warrants for, in the coming darkness, and they were thus compelled to lie to for the remainder of the night.

No information would the women give about anything, nor would they aid them in giving them food for themselves or horses. They saw clearly that it was an enemies' country they were in, and that no quarter was to be given or asked.

After taking what feed they could find for the horses, and leaving them with a guard, they proceeded on foot to search the rocks and ravines back of the house for some evidences of a still.

There was nothing to guide them, and the only thing was to follow the paths, and try to find the way by which the barrels of whiskey were brought out. This they could do up to a certain point, but beyond a flat place, where it was evident that they were filled from buckets brought there by human hands, they could discover nothing—not the least clue to the location of the still. Every path was followed carefully to where it apparently

ended, and not a still, or evidence of where one had been, was seen.

The day was wearing away, when a man who had been sent up to a ragged heap of rocks above their heads to keep a look-out for the moonshiners, lest they should come upon them by surprise, shouted that he had found a place where the rocks were stained with smoke.

Hearing this, the commander and some of the most skilful of his men clambered upon these rocks, and saw that they were thrown upon each other by some convulsion of nature, and that there were spaces of an inch or two or more between them down which they could not see, but which would permit the light to enter from the top and also the smoke to come from below.

"That moonshine plant is down below this pile of rocks, for the smoke has so stained them that fires have been burning there for a long time," the commander said, "but we have searched around the base of it in every way we know how, and not a sign has there been of human foot ever going in or out. There must be some way by which that fire is built and kept burning, so we must go over our work again, and see if we can find the way they get under here."

One of the men said: "They can't do this kind of a thing without having a trail, and I believe I can find it if you'll give me time enough."

"Take all the time you want, and if you find the still I will give you twenty-five dollars."

All around the rocks the search was again made, but without success. An old mountain man, who came from the region of the Big Sandy River, said: "Y'u'll niver unlock th' secret th' way y'u're goin' about it. Go fu'ther off an' y'u'll git on thar trac'. That ravine down thar, which looks from heyeh like it wus kivered all over 'ith bushes, mought be th' way they gets in."

"Take some men and search it, and see what you can find," was the command.

When the ravine was reached, it was plain that many persons had passed through it, and for a long time. There was quite a path, and the bushes had been broken away in many places. These marks led to a log which was over a wide gap, one end of which was on a ledge of rock. The log had been used for a crossing-place, by the way in which the bark had been worn smooth; but there was no sign of an opening at the end resting upon the ledge. Over it, however, the men "cooned it," and when the one leading reached the ledge and examined it for a short distance, he found, to his joy, that there was an opening under a huge rock, which looked like the mouth of a cave.

With cocked guns, and expecting to be fired upon every moment, the men stooped and entered this gloomy opening and found that it soon became much higher, and that they could see their way easily from the light which came through the rifts in the mass of rocks above them.

Walking along this way, they came to a large place



where there had been a still, that judging from the signs had been worked for years. Everything of any value had been removed, so that there was nothing either to destroy or to take with them as evidence before a jury.

When the commanding officer came—upon the summons of those who had found the place—he looked at it and said: “It is the most wonderful place of its kind I have ever seen, and no man but one raised in the mountains could ever have found it. Five determined men could defend it against all the force we have brought. I am glad of one thing it shows, that they are not going to fight us, but have run away, for if they were in for a fight, they would never have left this place, for there can be no better found for them, I am sure.”

“Don’t be too sartin,” the mountain man said. “They’ve taken away thar belongin’s so’s tuh go tuh another place, ’cause they’re shore y’u’d either fin’ this un, ur watch ’em so close they couldn’t work heyeh no longer. They’s a heap o’ places jest as good as this un fer them an’ thar business, an’ as bad fer us, ef we undertakes tuh follow ’em. Be warned an’ don’t go any further in these rocks arter these men, fer, ef y’u do, some of us air tuh die this day.”

“I am not here to listen to such talk as that, but to arrest the men who run this still, and who captured and maltreated Colonel Perry, and came near murdering him. Down into that ravine and find the way these men went out.”

"No doubt they went out by th' house, an th' road, that wuz the asiest an' th' safest way fer 'em. Y'u hed better try th' road, an' I jedge it 'll be a smart man whut fin's whar they took tuh th' lorrel an' went tuh th' rocks ag'in."

"Now, Big Sandy, you have done good work for to-day, don't show the 'white feather' so soon," the commander replied.

"I'll hev y'u know thet I'm a sworn officer o' th' gover'ment, an' that I'll do my duty to th' last p'int. Ef y'u're anxious tuh go intuh th' mouth o' hell, cum on, I'm with y'u; but don't say I didn't tell y'u what wuz afore y'u in th' way o' trouble."

Utterly discouraged, and not getting the least intimation of the direction taken by the moonshiners, the posse of deputies camped for the night at a little cabin on the roadside, where there was a spring of good water, and near which were several farms of the better quality, from which they hoped to get feed for their horses.

Every inquiry made by them had been met in the same way; nothing was known by the person inquired of as to the whereabouts or purposes of the men whom they were seeking.

The commander had consulted with the most experienced men in his band, and it was their united opinion that it would be better to give up the hunt for the present, and after the moonshiners had established themselves in the new place selected by them, to come

back and find them, as they would be sure, in carrying on their business, to make some signs.

After all had lain down on the ground to get what rest was possible under the circumstances they were in, except the sentinel, a man who had every appearance of being a mountaineer came to him in the road, and asked to see the Captain.

Being brought in, he announced without much parley, that if the Captain wanted to find the retreating moonshiners, he knew where they were, and was ready to take them to the place, if he was sure of protection after it was over, by being taken with them to Louisville, and provided for there.

The Captain was, naturally, doubtful of this man, and feared that he was sent to lead them into a trap. He immediately awakened Big Sandy and brought him into the conference. George Ball, for that was the man's name, told this tale to show the reason for his action :

"I's th' man whut let th' barrel of moonshine slip outen my han's th' night th' big man wuz heah. I'd bin drinkin' more whiskey 'an I could carry, an' I wa'n't strong an' steady 'nuff ter keep a hol' on sich a heavy thin'. Tom Turner cussed me all blue, an' he tol' me ef I didn't git right outen his way an' nuver cum in his sight agin, thet he'd put a bullet clar through me. I's bin layin' in th' mount'ins 'roun' heah ever sence, an' nobody 'll give me anythin' ter do ur a bite ter eat, 'cept th' folks in th' cabin over yander. I jist got ter git even

'ith Tom, an' now's my chance. I watched 'em an' I knows whar they is, an' kin take y'u ter whar y'u kin git all 'round 'em an' ketch most on 'em."

Big Sandy at once asked, "Whar did y'u cum frum? Y'u ain't no mountain-man, y'u don't talk exac'ly like one, nur y'u don't act like one."

Ball showed his uneasiness at this remark, and after some hesitation said: "I's ain't from aroun' heah, but I cums from th' mount'ins yander in Virginy."

"What made y'u cum? Run out o' thar, I reckon, like Turner run you out o' his ranks fer some very good r'ason," Big Sandy replied.

"I's wer' on th' wrong side of a feud over thar, an' I got work 'ith Turner when I's cum over heah 'cause I could use th' still better 'an he could."

The Captain, after hearing all he could or would disclose of himself and the men to whom he had proved traitor, made up his mind to keep him under the guard of Big Sandy and another trusty man, whom he directed to shoot him upon the least evidence of a purpose to betray them, and to arouse his posse to undertake the capture of the outlaws.

He knew that the probability was that his men would suffer at the hands of those whom he was seeking, but said, when this was spoken of by his chief deputy: "If we ever get these men, it must be after a fight, in which we will suffer loss, and I see no prospect of having a better opening than the present. I despise this traitor,

but we must use someone of his kind to find what we are seeking."

Ball did not resist having his arms taken away from him, and, though somewhat sullen, moved by the base and devouring passion of vengeance, he lent himself to the work he had promised to do.

His plan was to move slowly on foot and get to the place by midnight, when the moonshiners were asleep, and as there were but two ways through which they could escape, to post a strong body of men at both these points behind the rocks, and then scatter some other men in the woods above them to open fire upon them when they refused to surrender, as he was sure they would do.

It was a rough and steep path over which the posse trod that night, and it was two hours of great exhaustion, before Ball whispered to his guards that they were now near the place and that they had better stop for a while and rest, and wait until the moon rose higher.

The moonshiners had no one on guard. They had watched the movements of the posse all day, and when they went into camp for the night, were certain that they would not move before morning, and that no man could find them in the night.

They calculated rightly, and were now, in their unconscious sleep, awaiting the bullets of the deputies, because they were by nature incapable of supposing that there was a creature in all the mountains as base and low as Ball.

When sufficiently rested, Ball led the way to the place of entrance into the refuge of the moonshiners, and after the Captain had posted his men and given them orders in no case to allow anyone to pass them, the Captain and some of his men were led to where they could see down below them a fire, which was now reduced almost to black coals. He could see, by the bright moonlight, that several men were lying around the fire, and at once concluded that he had but a few to contend with. He was to awake amid the flash of rifles, to learn of his great mistake, for the men were sleeping on beds made of leaves and pine-tops in various little hollows in the rocks, but were all within call of the chieftain.

Looking down a hundred feet or more, it was his purpose to call on Turner, explain to him the situation and ask him, as he could not escape, quietly to surrender and prevent loss of life.

This could not be carried out, for the reason that one of the men loosened a stone, which in its descent started others, and the noise they made awoke Turner and a number of his followers.

It was almost immediately after the stone struck the place where the moonshiners lay, that their rifles began to speak; hence there was no time to utter a word. A man fell dead by the Captain's side, and two others were wounded before they were sufficiently recovered from their astonishment to use their guns. In the use of fire-arms the deputies were at a great disadvantage, when in

battle with the mountain-men. The latter could shoot better and quicker, were far cooler, and kept their wits about them; but as the deputies were six to one, and were brave, it was only a question of time when the moon-shiners would be defeated.

Ball begged for his arms that he might shoot Tom Turner, who, he hissed, was the one who shot so quickly and had killed the man by the Captain's side. They were given to him, as Big Sandy did not wish to carry them any longer, and needed freedom to use his own.

Ball crouched like a wild cat and slipped from rock to rock, until he was some distance in front of his companions, and many feet below them.

The deputies had scarcely recovered from their surprise in the way they had been so suddenly met and opened fire, which was so far without effect, before Ball, from the secure hiding-place he had found, shot the brave and vigilant Turner through the body, and he fell to lie there, and after a few moments of great pain, to die.

Ball curled his lips, laughed like a human hyena, and would not fire another shot.

When Turner fell, the men, who had now begun to shoot from behind the rocks, made a movement to retreat; but, being met by the guard posted to drive them back, and two or three of them being wounded, rushed back and made for the other way of escape, to be met as at the first one.

Only one man was here killed.

At this juncture an old white-haired man was seen seated by Tom Turner's body and giving what seemed to the Captain of the Marshals evidences of grief. Several shots were fired at him, but he was not touched.

When his son was certainly dead, Uncle Harve, for it was he, arose, seeing that the men would be finally captured or killed, if they stayed where they were, as the guards at both places of egress from the trap where they were now caught had moved in the wake of the men when they had been driven back, and were now beginning to fire upon them, and shaking himself, like the mighty men of valour in the olden times of our race, shouted, "Form behin' me, men; we'll break out o' heye ur die a-tryin'."

They knew the voice now summoning them, and the man whose heart had been broken at the death of his first-born child, now seemed infused with the daring and strength of many departed heroes; firing his Winchester as he advanced, he led them into the vortex of death. He did not care to live. The thought that dominated his energy was to avenge his son, and to save the men who now followed him from prison or death.

If the men of the posse had stayed where Ball placed them, Uncle Harve would have failed. Their advance had widened their front, and had brought them out from the rocks which protected them, so, when Uncle Harve and his men came upon them, they were pushed aside and several of them went down either killed or wounded.

When it seemed that all the moonshiners would escape,



except those who had been wounded, Uncle Harve, who was now out beyond the guards and free to go as he would in safety, turned back to see if all the men were with him, and suddenly fell upon his face, being shot by someone from above him in the rocks.

As he fell, his younger son and several of his immediate relations and friends, stopped by what they supposed to be his dead body, and the way being closed by some men, led by Ball with the Captain, coming down and getting in the gap, they were captured.

No more broken-hearted men ever gathered around a fallen hero than those now tenderly touching the person of the old soldier, and shedding tears of heartfelt grief as they mourned over him, lying there among the rocks he loved so well, fit emblems of his strong and rugged character.

When the deputies all came together and it was made known to them that the man whose white hair was reflecting the moonbeams, was the man who had so dramatically saved the life of Colonel Perry, they took off their hats in solemn awe, and the Captain mentioned to his son and relatives that they were free to care for him as best they could.

The old man was not dead, and when Big Sandy and one of the moonshiners had staunched his wound and given him some whiskey, he recovered and was able to speak. He asked nothing for himself, but told his captors that he wished his son's body to be given to his

friends and that the other wounded man should be well cared for.

It was a task which put all the ingenuity and skill of the victors to a full test to get the dead and wounded men out of the place. It was, however, accomplished after a time, by carrying some upon the backs of strong men and others upon litters which the old soldiers knew how to make.

Big Sandy, at his earnest request, was allowed to care for Uncle Harve. When he went to him, putting his powder-stained hand on his face, and stooping over, said, "Uncle Harve, ol' man, how are y'u feelin' now?" Uncle Harve looked into his face and said weakly, but with great feeling, "Jim, is that air y'u, an' hev we bin a-fightin' one another?" Big Sandy was too much convulsed with weeping to speak.

These men had been in the same regiment during the whole war, and as so many of the men were killed, or too disabled for duty, the regiment became so small that the companies were consolidated, and these two, both being members of the Primitive Baptist Church, had been very close to each other.

In the hurry, Ball disappeared, and when Big Sandy had ministered to his dear old comrade, he hunted for him with a look in his eye which betokened no good to him.

Next morning, the marshals slowly went down the river road to Oakville to take the cars for Louisville.

Big Sandy and five other men whom he chose lovingly carried Uncle Harve on a litter over the rough places in the road, lest the jolting of the wagon should hurt him, and when in the wagon, Big Sandy was always by his side, soothing him in every way possible and ready to render him every service in his power.

The men who had been with Big Sandy on many raids, and had seen much of him in various circumstances, would shake their heads when looking at him, and say: "He's cut to the heart: He'll never go on another raid, and he'll never leave that old moonshiner as long as he's alive."

They were in time for the midnight train for Louisville when they reached Oakville, and the Captain and enough of the men for guards went on with the prisoners, Big Sandy being made glad by the Captain saying to him, "I intended to leave you in command of the men, but out of consideration for your feelings I detail you to take charge of your old army friend."

## XXV

### UNCLE HARVE IN LOUISVILLE

**I**N the early morning, the surgeon met the train at the station in Louisville, and, after examining Uncle Harve, said that it would not do to put him in jail or take him to the United States' Commissioner for examination. He very decidedly recommended that he be sent to the hospital under guard, to await the result of his injuries.

The commander of the deputies called Big Sandy aside and told him that he would send him to the hospital with the wounded man as guard, as he would know how to make his old comrade as comfortable as possible and give him every attention which would tend perhaps to his recovery.

Uncle Harve was much surprised to find himself separated from his companions, and in an ambulance with his old-time friend. Big Sandy gave his gun to one of the other deputies, saying: "I won't need this, me an' Harve understan' one 'nother, an' I've got tuh answer tuh th' gover'ment fer him with my life."

The sweet, clean cot, and the touch of hands which soothed the spirit and cooled the fever, were to Uncle Harve a beacon of hope. He looked at his friend as he

sat near him, and though he did not speak to him often, the look of trust discernible in his face told that he was sure of him, and had perfect confidence in his goodwill.

Colonel Perry called every day, but it was thought best not to excite the weak and failing man by the surge of feeling which would rush over him at the sight of the one he had rescued from death.

When the surgeon gave up hope of the recovery of the old soldier, as the wound was so close to the old one in his breast, that inflammation had been renewed in it, the importunate pleadings of the Colonel to be permitted to minister to the man to whom he owed all the powers he had with which to help anyone were granted.

Uncle Harve was in a disturbed sleep from the influence of medicine when the Colonel entered, and Big Sandy, out of politeness, had given him his seat and stood at the head of the cot out of sight of the sufferer.

What visions were passing in the mind of the dauntless patriot no human pen can say, but the old man's features showed that his active mind was employed in movement, where fear had no place, and the high qualities of heroism were given exercise. Was he in the ranks swept by the "minnie balls" of Hood's Texans, and answering the wild blood-curdling Rebel yell which sounded above the cannon's boom and the scream of the shell, as his comrades fell around him, by shouting to the broken ranks of the bloody and terrible Second

Kentucky Infantry: "Close up on the right, men, an' at 'em with the bayonet fer the sake o' old Kentuck'?" Or was he seated in the centre of a ring of fire, holding his first-born son in his arms and thinking of his wife who was laid away on the old hill back of Pete Finley's cabin, when he was yet weak from unhealed wounds, staggering after Joe Johnston in North Carolina? Or did faces and forms come to him of the women and children in the mountain cabins, now twice bereft of husbands and fathers, because, if not dead, they were shut up in jail and soon to be incarcerated for years in penal servitude?

In his delirium he saw Mandy's face looking upon him, and, stirring, he said, "Howdy, Mandy?" and opening his eyes saw Colonel Perry, when he expected to see his old comrade.

He did not speak, but his eyes made it evident that he was with his son and those who acted with him, and when he said, in a low voice, "I didn't make it no worse," the Colonel could not restrain his tears and so could not speak, but put his hand on the wasted one of the old man, while he controlled himself sufficiently to say, "Mr. Turner, I am here to thank you for my life, and to give all I have to help you now and ever hereafter."

Uncle Harve only looked at him steadily, as if over the sight of his Winchester, and said, "I didn't make it no worse," meaning that it was just the same in agony and

death to him and his whether the Colonel were dead or alive. Then he turned his eyes around the ward, seeking for a sight of his companion, Big Sandy, and when seeing this, the old man moved and came into view, a look of content, came over Uncle Harve's face.

"Do you wish any message to be sent to your home-folks, or wish them to come to you," the Colonel asked. He was much confused at this, and it seemed as though he was not going to reply to it. Big Sandy here came, and, bending over him, said gently, "Harve, ol' man, we'll sen' fer y'r folks ef y'u wants tuh see 'em, an' bring 'em heyeh right away. Colonel Perry says y'u mustn't stop 'cause it 'll cos' a lot, fer he hez all th' money y'u needs fer 'em tuh come on."

Still, though it was seen that a struggle was going on from his face, he did not speak.

"We wants tuh sen' by tuh-day's mail, Harve, an' it 'll go in an hour. Let us know right away," added Big Sandy.

"Ef he'll take a lien on me farm fer th' money, I'd like 'em sent fer," he slowly said.

"All right, just as you wish," the Colonel said.

"Write tuh Sis tuh th' Cou't House, an' tell her tuh cum an' bring 'em. She'll know whut tuh do," the old man faintly said.

Colonel Perry went as rapidly as he could to his office, which was in the same building as the Post-Office and wrote to Ruth that it was the opinion of the doctors that

Uncle Harve would live but a few days, and that it was his desire that she should come on at once, and bring any members of his family who wished to see him, but to do in the entire matter as she thought best.

"As it is probable that a letter addressed to his daughter would not be received for many days, if at all, I write only to you. Please take Miss Camp's advice; as she is known to me to be a lady of discretion. The enclosed check will be cashed for you by the Postmaster, who knows me well, and is in the habit of cashing checks for us when on duty in the mountains. Do not spare money in doing whatever you think necessary; there is much more here at your service, as all I have belongs to Mr. Turner, if he is in need of it."

When Ruth received this letter the next day, she placed it in Miss Camp's hands, who, after reading it, said: "Miss Finley, go, prepare yourself for the trip, while I get the money on this check and find someone to take you to the house of the old Elder, who will no doubt go with you on your errand and do everything needed to further it."

Sis was soon ready to go, and when she came down from her room, she saw Miss Camp coming across the public square, and, following her, was a mounted man, leading a horse upon which was a side-saddle for her.

"Miss Ruth, here is the hundred dollars for the check. Mount at once, and make no delay in getting to



the railroad at Oakville. By travelling to-night, you can catch the morning train. Don't leave your father's friend and yours until you can bring him back and bury him by the side of his wife, if he dies, and if he recovers so as to be able to come home, bring him with you. I am sure Colonel Perry will go on his bond that he may be released on bail."

In three hours Ruth was telling the old Elder of the contents of the letter, and, of course, did not need to ask him to help her.

"Y'u kin feed y'r hosses an' git a snack an' go back tuh th' Cou't House. I'll see tuh all whut's tuh be done meself," he said to the man. "I'm goin' tuh Harve 'ith you, Sis."

To save time, he sent his son to get the horses, and went and put on his "preachin' clo'es." "We mus' be a-goin' so's not tuh be too late at night in gettin' tuh Oakville," he urged.

It was not much out of the way to go by Uncle Harve's cabin, and Mandy did not take many minutes in putting on her homespun dress and green sunbonnet. A short halt was made at Mrs. Finley's, and as Bub was "set on goin'," he was told to get his colt and come along.

Oakville was reached by eleven o'clock, and, before sleeping, the old Elder arranged with a friend to keep the horses for them until they came back.

Colonel Perry was at the station at Louisville to meet

them, having telegraphed the conductor at Lebanon Junction to know if they were on the train. He handed them into a carriage and drove rapidly to the hospital, for Uncle Harve appeared to be sinking fast, and there was danger that he would pass into unconsciousness and never return to the knowledge of surrounding things.

The old Elder was more broken by the bad news than any of them. His large heart was swelling with emotions which rose like a tide, impelled by the thoughts and remembrances of more than fifty years.

Mandy wept silently in one corner of the coach, and Ruth and Bub sat holding each other's hand and keeping back the outward expression of the grief which, because of this, was only more potently gnawing at their hearts.

When they reached the hospital, they were cautioned by the head-nurse not to give way to their feelings, as there was always slight hope, even in the most desperate case.

The old Elder, leading Mandy, first entered the ward, and when they came to the side of the cot the old man, who seemed to be far gone into the "river of death," looked up and saw them, his eyes went from one to another, giving out glances of love and confidence, and taking in gleams of hope and joy in return. The appearance of pain and death began to clear from his face, like fleecy clouds passing from that of the sun, beginning at

his forehead and coming down until his lips moved with a childlike smile of content.

Little was said, the Elder could not talk, his heart was so wrung. Uncle Harve was turned by the nurse and Big Sandy on his side, so that he could the better see them, and, as he gazed, his unconquerable soul shook off the waters of death and began to take on fresh strength for other years of life.

At nine o'clock the doctor came in, and on an examination he told Colonel Perry that he believed, if there was a continuance of the improvement of the last few hours, that the old man "would pull through yet."

As none of the mountain-quartet would consent to leave the cot of the sufferer, they were permitted to "set up" with him in the mountain fashion. The old man slept at short intervals all night, and every time he waked, his glance would go from face to face, as if he had something to get from each one. They were to him like a breath of mountain air, which had in it no trace of grime or dust.

When the morning came, content was on his brow, and it was plain that his forces had rallied, and that he was much better.

Day by day, the little company came from the boarding-house, where Colonel Perry had established them, to be with and strengthen the now slowly recovering man.

As it was assured, after some days, that he would soon

be able to go before the Commissioner, Colonel Perry spoke to the Elder about an attorney, and of someone to go on his bond at the same time, telling him that he was ready to give a bond which would be sufficient and provide a fee for any attorney he would wish to have. He also suggested, as the next term of the Federal Court would begin in about two weeks, that if Uncle Harve continued to improve as he was now doing, it would be best to have his case tried at that term of the Court.

He had good hopes that such was the feeling in his behalf, that if the case were properly handled, he would be acquitted. This, he explained, would save him from going back to the mountains before he was a free man, and would also prevent a long period of anxiety, which might affect his health.

The old Elder seconded this advice, and declared that he would stay with, and stand by, Harve until the last day in the morning, and as long as he had a button on his coat.

When Uncle Harve became aware of what was to be done, he agreed to the course indicated, and asked that "that air Keith man be sent fer tuh do his part o' th' lawin', as he wuz a man fer a mount'in-man tuh tie to."

Keith had never appeared in a Federal court, and felt somewhat doubtful of his ability to meet the requirements of such a case as that of Uncle Harve; but he came as soon as he could arrange his business for his absence.

Uncle Harve was much relieved when he saw him, and said: "Ye won't sell a man out, I knows, an'll stan' fer whut's right 'till th' las' horn blows."

"But, Uncle Harve, I am not familiar with the mode of procedure in the United States Court, and I think that I had better have some one of the old and experienced practitioners at the bar of the court to aid me, so as to insure that no mistake will be made which might injure your case."

"Git 'em ef y'u wants tuh, but mind I'll be a-trustin' in y'u tuh keep 'em in th' traces an' see they don't kick outen 'em. I hain't no faith in lawyers any more than I hev in a leaky canoe. I wants som' un tuh bail out th' water, when I gits in it, or I'll hev tuh swim fer it. Y'u watch 'em close, an' keep 'em frum lettin' me sink ef y'u gits 'em. That's all."

Ruth and Mandy, with Bub, went home after Uncle Harve "got about," and left him in the care of the old Elder, who was to stay for the trial, to testify to the good character and standing of Uncle Harve in the neighbourhood where he lived.

Mr. Keith said he would remain in Louisville, look up the law, study his case, and otherwise put himself in trim to aid in every way possible the cause of his client.

Ruth was delighted to be near Keith again, a feeling reciprocated most heartily by him. She was showing the improvement in her mind in the increasing beauty of her face; and while the two years added to her

age was bringing out the elegance of her form in so many ways that Keith thought her not simply a "magnificent creature," as he said she was when he first made her acquaintance, but the most beautiful and lovable woman he had ever seen.

Ruth returned to school with a renewed resolution to employ all her time and abilities to gain what her opportunities had in store for her. She resolved that when she went to Louisville again, she would not feel the embarrassment which she had suffered from so keenly on their trip, because conscious of the lack of that which made the ladies whom she met, when with Mrs. Perry, so much at their ease, and the delight of those with whom they associated.

Then her affection for Keith was now so deep and strong that she was not only under its influence, but was moved by it to rise in every accomplishment which would make her worthy to become his wife, should that be one of the things happily allotted to her in life.

## XXVI

### THE TRIAL

**I**N few places in this country could there be seen such an aggregation of strange and curious, as well as wretched, persons as thronged the corridors and rooms of the United States Court House at Louisville when the term of court began at which Uncle Harve was to be tried.

Dressed—or perhaps we should say undressed—in homespun garments, dyed with copperas, or the bark of walnut or sweet-gum trees, and cut and made by the women, after the pattern of a hundred years ago, with little relation to the shape or height of the person wearing them, they presented a motley appearance. Some of the men had on only a shirt and pair of trousers, and a coarse pair of shoes or boots, made of material from their own section, even to the wooden pegs by which the soles were fastened to the uppers. The trousers were held on them—for they were usually from six to ten inches too large around the waist—by at least one suspender of the same material. Thorns were often used instead of buttons to fasten these suspenders or “gallowses,” as they named them. Upon their heads they wore either a coon-skin cap, or a wool hat of the cheapest and coarsest kind.

They had little or no money, and many of them manifestly suffered for the want of the simplest food.

At times, the United States marshals ran a drag-net through sections of the mountains and brought the simple, the infirm, and the poor under arrest to the city, upon any pretext or, as sometimes happened, on no pretext at all.

Colonel Perry frequently found himself forced to pay out of his own pocket the railroad fare of some of these persons to their homes, to prevent them from starving on the streets of the city, or starting out to walk 150 or 200 miles without a mouthful of food or a cent of money.

It is probable that a number of innocent men were sent to the penitentiary, because, from the distance to be travelled, and the want of money, witnesses could not be secured.

Their hair was, in most instances, long and tangled, as if no comb had traced its length and depth for many years, and their faces often remained innocent of the touch of water for weeks together.

There were to be seen some sunbonnets in the crowd also, for wives and mothers not infrequently sold the last of their earthly possessions to get money to follow husbands and sons to the courts, to be with them at these trials. Worn by long years of hardship and worry, these women presented a picture of utter despair in face and manner, which no true lover of his kind could look upon without deep feeling.



They were, for the most part, a silent throng. Their large and thoughtful eyes spoke for them as they watched the movements of the officers of the court, and listened to the marshals and clerks, as they gave orders and called the witnesses and attorneys. Everything was strange to them, and they did not trust anyone. They felt that they were being abused and outraged, and each longed to be upon his native heath, his Winchester in his hands, and plenty of ammunition in his belt.

Keith was advised by Mr. Marshall, a lawyer of national reputation, to wait as long as possible in bringing Uncle Harve to trial, as the jury would, after sending a number of men to the penitentiary, be more in the spirit of acquitting others.

The young man saw the wisdom of this, after witnessing the promptness and decision with which the men were convicted. The jury was composed of middle-aged men, most of whom had seen more or less service in the army, and who had been summoned from all over the State, save from the mountain region. No man from the mountains would convict one of the prisoners, for he could never return home again if he did, unless the government should afford him army protection during the remainder of his life.

At last the pale and feeble old man was put in the prisoners' dock, and, by special and earnest request, the old Elder was allowed to sit with him.

In his "sarment," after he got home, Elder Morgan

said: "When, my brethrin, I seen that air weak ol' man, es white es th' kivers o' top o' him, who were onct straight an' strong as one o' them trees out thar in front o' th' meetin'-house tuh which y'u ties y'r hosses, y'u ez hez got hosses, I went in thar an' when I sot down a-side o' him, I felt prouder 'an when I were 'ith him at th' battle o' Perryville, an' I seen him lyin' like dead on th' groun' an' I says to him, 'Bruther Harve, air y'u much hurt?' an' he open' his eyes an' said: 'Elder, don't min' me, I'm good fer nothin' but tuh die, be up an' arter them fool-rebels.'"

The proof was clear that Uncle Harve was with the moonshiners when Colonel Perry was captured, and also when he was taken prisoner himself. This was clearer and more than had been needed in most of the cases where conviction had been secured in the trials preceding this one, and the United States Attorney had prepared for nothing more.

Mr. Keith on cross-examination asked the witnesses if they had ever known, from their personal knowledge, the prisoner at the bar to make or sell or have in his possession any illicitly distilled whiskey. The first witness tried to hedge off these questions and to tell of where and with whom he had seen Uncle Harve.

Mr. Keith objected to such answers, and after an argument of some length, in which the defence contended that as the indictment charged the prisoner with being what is commonly known as "a moonshiner," and not as

bearing or using firearms, or the wounding or killing of men, that the prosecution must establish, beyond a reasonable doubt that Harvey Turner was seen by these witnesses to either make, sell, or have in his possession, whiskey upon which the license due the government of the United States had not been paid.

The judge sustained the defence in its contention, and ruled that witnesses must be confined to testifying to what was germane to the indictment, and not to what, if there was any purpose in it, was likely to prejudice the jury against the prisoner.

The attorney for the government, being a sensible man, as well as a good lawyer, seeing that the more witnesses he brought, who failed to reach the points made necessary by the indictment, the worse it was for his case, called very few and was quick in getting through with them.

The old Elder was put upon the stand, and testified that he had baptised Uncle Harve more than forty years before, and that, so far as he knew, he believed he had been a Christian man, and was so held by the community where he lived.

The attorney for the prosecution tried, on cross-examination, to prove by the Elder that he had seen Uncle Harve in "flagrante delicto" with whiskey, but Keith stopped this by saying that he had not laid grounds for such questions in the examination-in-chief, and if the prosecution desired to ask such questions, it would have to introduce the old Elder as its own witness.

The United States Attorney summed up in a short and incisive speech, and asked for a conviction upon general principles, rather than upon the direct evidence of his witnesses. He alluded to Mr. Keith as a raw youth from the mountains, who had come down to the region of civilisation for the first time, to save from prison a hoary-headed sinner, who had been broken in pieces by the consequence of his own crimes.

Mr. Keith was timid about speaking and had urged Mr. Marshall, a great man and practiced orator, who was with him in the case and whose voice had been heard within the walls of the Capitol of the nation, to perform this duty, but the wise and discerning man, in declining, told him:

“Your enthusiasm, love, and respect for our client is such that if you will go into your address with all your heart and ring the changes upon the old man’s war-record, and describe his conduct in the battles he was in, I think the jury will be sure to consider long before it sends him to prison. Then the old man will not be satisfied unless you speak, and, if he is sent to prison, he will always blame me in his heart for being there. No man can tell what a jury will do; but the wiser course, in my opinion, is for you to go on and do the best you can.”

Keith’s voice was firm and clear, though his knees did tremble when he arose to address the jury. He had noticed that the work of the attorneys for the prosecution had been mostly perfunctory and without animation,

and he resolved that, come what might, he would give the best he had to Uncle Harve and his cause.

In a few well-chosen and terse sentences he drew the contrast between the words of the indictment and the proof offered by the attorney for the government, and then, calling attention to the way in which that attorney had gone back to the expedient of the discredited attorneys of England of the past century, and when he found he had no case, had attempted to abuse the attorney on the side against him.

He said, "I may be a raw youth from the mountains, but even in that benighted part of the earth, as my brother for the prosecution would have you think it to be, it has never been known that a man was indicted for one offence and tried for another.

"We have had to come into this entrepôt of all the beneficent arts and sciences, which are intended to ameliorate the hard places of man's lot, and to beautify and adorn society with that which makes it a paradise for enjoyment and a theatre for achievement, to find a lawyer who outrages all law and ignores all precedent in his malign effort to get the blood of one of the heroes of his country, now on the verge of the grave from old age and hardships and wounds borne for his country's honor and defence; while, to cover his dastardly attack on the liberty of that old man"—here he paused a moment and pointed to Uncle Harve—"he makes an attempt to discredit the counsel for the defence and to

asperse the region from which 'old Kentucky' draws the strongest and truest of her soldiers.

"If your honour please, and you, gentlemen of the jury, will hear me, I will proceed to read the record of the enlistment, and services of Harvey Turner, in the Army of the United States.

"In the first band of patriots that came down from the mountains, armed with their hunting-rifles, the prisoner appeared. Then his hair was black and his face ruddy, his step was elastic and firm, and his port showed to all the world that he was a man. In the camp of instruction when he was asked for how long a term he would enlist, he proudly replied: 'Till th' las' man who shoots at that air ol' flag's dead ur whipped.'

"In the little band of feeble and broken men who survived the horrors of one of the most terrible wars of history, he came back home, to find his wife in the grave, his children living with relatives upon their bounty, and his farm desolated; and when he had given up his arms and been mustered out of the service, and a band marched down the streets, playing 'The Star-spangled Banner,' he cried, 'Fall in, men, an' let's us step onct more to th' music o' th' Union.' Leading the march, as if young again, he kept step with his comrades as long as the blast of patriotism went out upon the air of heaven."

Mr. Keith then described Uncle Harve in several battles where he had fought, with a fervent eloquence which at times moved the jury to tears, and caused the

judge more than once to put his handkerchief to his face. Then he added, "Gentlemen of the jury, I ask you to recall the terror of the battles in which you fought, amid smoke and noise and death. Remember the wild and furious charges you were in; the despairing retreats you were forced to make with breaking hearts; the wounds and imprisonments, in damp and vermin-filled prison-houses, where you suffered the agonies of death from home-sickness and hunger and thirst and disease, and then ask yourselves if you will consider even the possibility of sending this, your old comrade, to suffer the disgrace and peril of imprisonment.

"Behold him, gentlemen, as he now sits before you. You do not look upon a pensioner. He has refused and will refuse to be thus paid for the free and willing service he rendered his country in her sore trial. He was always a private soldier, and has never pleaded his war-record as a reason why he should be given an office under the government, as some who are always seeking office have done (here he looked at the attorney for the government); but has found himself satisfied to be one who gave all he had in the hour of trial to his country, and whose proudest distinction will ever be that he was, and always will be, a loyal Kentuckian."

Mr. Keith sat down, and the judge was evidently reluctant to begin to charge the jury (the attorney for the government had declined to speak again). The judge began, and said simply: "If you believe, gentlemen, be-

yond a doubt, which is in accord with reason, that the prisoner at the bar is guilty, as charged in the indictment, you will find him guilty, and if you are in doubt, you will of course acquit him."

The jury filed out, and the attorneys immediately began to congratulate Mr. Keith upon his wonderfully effective speech and the reputation which it would give him in court.

His associate-counsel, Mr. Marshall, patted him on the shoulder and said: "You see, I made the best possible decision in the case by forcing you to address the jury. I shall always be proud of it, both because it will surely result in the acquittal of our old friend over there, and in the introduction to the bar of a man who is destined to be one of the foremost lawyers of Kentucky. If you will come into my office I'll make you a partner—this is an offer, and I hope you will do me the honour to accept it, and wind up your business in Yellowboro as soon as possible."

Mr. Keith was nonplussed for some moments by what was said to him, and the great good-fortune which had been the reward of his self-sacrificing work for his mountain friend,—self-sacrificing so far as it was not for the sake of Ruth Finley.

The jury were soon back in their seats.

"Do you, gentlemen of the jury, find the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?" the officer asked in a loud tone which was heard out into the corridor.



The foreman rose and said: "We find him *not* guilty." There was a buzz of approbation throughout the courtroom. Many started to the desk to take Uncle Harve by the hand and congratulate him, but, all stopped at what they saw. The old Elder did not rise when he heard the announcement of the verdict, but put his arms around the neck of his life-long companion and friend, and Uncle Harve put his arm around the man who had been his ideal of honesty and truth and of the religion of Christ all his life. They did not speak, they simply embraced each other, and silently wept as only the strongest men can weep when the gates of life are opened by the command of a gratitude which is of God and comes from God.

The Elder's chair slipped from under him, and he rose and partly lifted Uncle Harve at the same time, who also now stood upon his feet. "Harve, brother o' my soul, I'm powerful glad; now we'll go home an' spen' our days in sarvin' th' good Lord fer His marcy tuh us."

"Yes, Elder, I'm mighty glad, too. The Rebels nuver got me tuh prison, an' I'm thankful my own folks won't put me thar. I felt shore I were gone when I seed how fas' they sent them others up, but I didn't want tuh worry y'u by lettin' on. I know'd it 'd be hard 'nuff when it cum tuh yer 'ithout lookin' fer it."

The old soldier felt most of all the coming of the jury-men to him, and telling him that they could not find him guilty, and then asking him as a special favour to them

that he would, for what remained to him of life, be a quiet man and not go with those who were in the ways of lawlessness. With bowed head, the old soldier said: "I promise," and then the Elder added firmly and in his preaching tone, "Harve were nuver know'd not tuh keep a promise onct he hed made it."

Uncle Harve was himself again by the time Mr. Keith joined them and greeted him with, "Were that me y'u wuz a-talkin' 'bout whun y'u wuz speechefyin', ur were it some other feller?"

The cars that night had three passengers for the mountains, and though they sat together, they said very little to each other. When the two old men left Mr. Keith at Oakville, the latter said: "I will not say good-bye, for I am coming up in a few days to see you and say 'howdy,' as I have some business to attend to at Smith's Court House before I remove to Louisville."

## XXVII

### RUTH GRADUATES

**R**UTH FINLEY showed what a strong will, together with a mind susceptible of receiving and retaining good and lasting impressions, can accomplish in three years, when it is moved to action by a purpose single in aim, and concentrated by an exalted and inspiring passion.

The ordinary and profane did not influence her enough to cause a halt in her onward movement, even long enough to listen to their allurements. Her object, to gain all that her teachers could aid her in securing, was always with her in such force that her proud and energetic spirit took it as part of itself, and there was nothing lost in hesitation or in conflict.

Miss Camp was so impressed by what she was doing, and inspired by her evident devotion to her heart's desire, that she helped in giving her instruction in a way that so quickened her mind and brought to her memory what she had been taught in the institution in the East from which she graduated, that she delighted to meet Ruth both in the school-room and in private, when the latter needed help in some difficult matter.

Now that the day of graduation had come, both teacher

and pupil were pleased with each other, and were conscious that good work had been faithfully done and that progress beyond the hope of either had been made.

The mountain girl, who had entered the school shy as the doe upon the mountain-ranges, and had suffered so keenly from mortification at her plain homespun dress and coarse, unlined, thick-soled shoes, and green sun-bonnet, who did not know how to arrange her hair, which came below her waist, and was so thick and harsh that it, like many other things in that region, defied proper control, was now the self-possessed young lady, admired of all, and loved by her teachers and schoolmates.

Miss Camp, when sending to her sister at her home for some articles needed by herself, had ordered the simple white material suitable for a dress for Ruth and then made it a point of showing her love to her pupil that she should receive it from her. Mountain pride was subdued by mountain love—the only way to conquer it—and Ruth was soon as much interested in putting the material into form as her teacher.

The old Elder and Uncle Harve, with all the Finley family, were there to witness the closing exercises of the school, and, with them, were almost all the congregation of the Salem Meeting-House.

Ruth had not put on her graduating attire until after the meeting with her family and friends, and so when she marched up the aisle of the Mission chapel with the

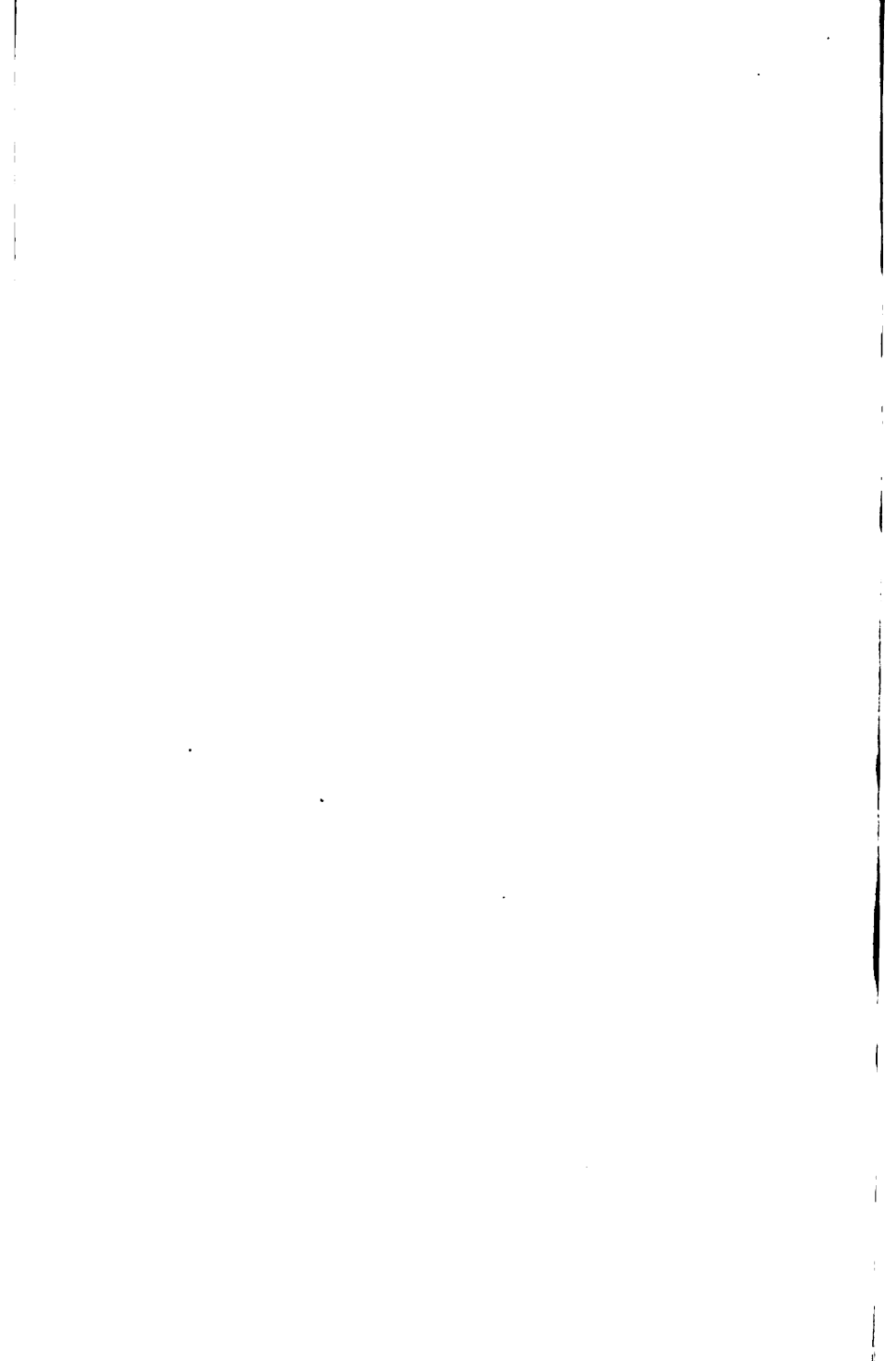
teachers and her fellow-pupils, there was a great sensation among the visitors in the church, especially among her own people. Bub rose up and forgot to sit down again for a moment, and her mother seemed dazed and ready to cry. Keith drew up his shoulders and looked. Could it be possible that this was the "Sis" of the mountain cabin—this woman with the refinement and grace of a duchess and a beauty that might be the envy of a queen?

Uncle Harve said nothing, but, as he reported afterwards, "took it out in lookin', an' did a powerful sight o' thinkin'." The old Elder, who was on the platform, turned round and took a long breath, as he did when rising to a climax in his "sarments," and finally remarked to Mr. Gordon, who was by his side, "That gal's jest like Pete Finley, only she's bin gen'ally made tuh look purtier. I nuver seed th' like in all my born days, an' ef gals make so much trouble 'ith th' boys in these parts, as they hez, 'ithout whut this heyeh school does tuh 'em, I wonder what's goin' tuh happen now they's all tuh be made up like Sis thar."

Mr. Gordon read the Scriptures and then announced that the guardian and life-long friend of one of the graduates would lead in prayer. Elder Morgan rose very slowly and, taking off his spectacles, drew the case from his trousers' pocket—he had no vest—and, with great deliberation, put them in the case and returned it to his pocket. He then walked to the edge of the platform,



"COULD IT BE POSSIBLE THAT THIS WAS 'SIS'  
OF THE MOUNTAIN CABIN?"



crossed his hands before him, and after deliberately looking the audience over, said: "We'll now approach th' throne o' grace in behalf o' these people now heyeh."

It would be a reflection on Omniscience to think that He was unaware of what would flow from the elder's lips, but it is certain that no other intelligence in the universe had any conception of what was to come. The vehicle of its presentation, to a wondering company, certainly worked with the instrument of thought without any forecast of results; and he was as surprised at himself as the others who heard him when he became aware of what he had said.

As his chief objection to the people who had the school was that they were too much like the Methodists, and did not preach and believe in election, as the Bible taught it, and as the events of life proved it, he took comfort in the confidence that God had ordered it all from before the foundation of the world and that he had nothing to do with it.

He asked the Lord to "Bless Brother Gordon, ah, that poor innercent lamb ah, fer we all knows, ah, that he does th' bes' he knows how, ah." Then he asked "that th' school mought be kep', ah, frum makin' th' women, ah, too proud tuh do thar work, ah, an' frum makin' all th' gals, ah, tuh dress up as fine as a fiddle ah, an' swing 'round ah, tuh show theirselves off, ah, like th' gals in Louisville, ah."



The teachers then came in for their share and he asked "that them air dear an' purty teachers whut am larnin' th' gals outen thar big books, ah, mought be kep' frum puttin' too many fool-notions, ah, in th' gals' heads ah, sich as 'll make 'em afeered of a cow, ah, so th' men, ah, 'll hev tuh do th' milkin', ah, which y'u, ah, knows, ah, haint right, as hit were ordered, ah, frum afore th' foundation o' th' worl', ah, fer didn't Rebecca, ah, take th' cattle an' sheep tuh water, ah?"

In turn all present, either as one of a class or as individuals, came into this remarkable "address to the throne of grace," and it became a matter of serious difficulty for Miss Camp to control her girls, and a serious question whether the old Elder would get through in time for the remainder of the exercises to be concluded that night.

At last, some invisible power intervened and stopped him, exhausted, and without saying Amen, with great deliberation he returned to his seat and the programme was begun.

This was one of the first occasions of its kind in that region, and, to many present, the only one they had ever attended. It filled them with mingled wonder and pleasure, especially the music by Miss Bell.

Mr. Gordon spoke for the teachers and the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the church, who had established and maintained the school, and told his audience that the chief aim of those who were directing and sus-

taining it was to prepare the young women to uphold themselves in all the true relations of life—to be able to teach with greater accuracy and zeal, when called to become teachers in the public schools of the country, and to do the best that was in them for the rising generation of young people.

Higher than all these aims was the chief and dominant idea of following Christ humbly and sincerely and in planting and deepening piety in human souls.

“We know that, the Baptist ministers have been constantly preaching the doctrines of that church in this country ever since the land was first settled by your fathers, all of whom came from Virginia, and that the Methodist circuit-rider has been in almost every community for at least seventy years, and that it is a rare thing to find an adult person in this region who is not a member of one of these bodies of Christian people, and rarer still to find one who has not heard Jesus proclaimed as the only Saviour of the world by them; but we think we have been moved by the Holy Spirit to undertake the work we are now trying to do, that the young people may receive an education, which the State steadily and constantly refuses to give them, and which is so badly needed that we cannot answer to God, and at the bar of our own consciences, if we fail to continue to press it, as He has given us opportunity and power.

“We desire not to interfere with our brethren of other churches, but to help them in their work, and our hope

is that, co-operating with them in all their well-meant and divinely guided labours, we shall see some day these mountains filled with a people renowned as much for their education and piety, as they are now for their honesty and courage."

The old Elder said, after the exercises were over, that "That air young man talked so smooth-like, an' seem tuh know so much, I really believe thet ef I could git him tuh use th' holy tone, an' talk long 'nuff, he mought make a preacher yit, some day."

Miss Camp only said that she hoped to see them all again next year, and that they could see in Miss Finley, one of their own people, whom they had heard read her essay, what was the nature of the work they were doing.

"Miss Finley has been invited to remain with us for the next year as one of our teachers, while she continues her studies under our care. May we not expect to see a number of her friends here with her?"

"Wall, Sis, I don't gin no opinion 'bout all this thin'," said Uncle Harve, "as I hain't got down 'nuff tuh its vital parts yit, but y'u knows, honey, y'u's nex' tuh Mandy thar, plump in my ol' heart, an' as long as I kin do a thing on this yearth, y'u kin call on y'r Uncle Harve. It don't seem nateral-like fer y'u tuh be a teacher, an' be so dressed up. I kin hardly know it's y'u, but, Sis, y'u'll nuver be above th' poor ol' man who were Pete's frien' an' yourn uver sence y'u was born, will y'u?"

The old man's voice quavered and gave such proof of

his heart-ache, that Ruth was overcome and put her arms around his neck, and kissed him, saying: "No, Uncle Harve, no place is so good to my eyes as to cause me to think of being above you, the truest, kindest man I've ever known since the sad day when Pa was brought home dead."

Mrs. Finley did not feel right until Ruth had taken off her graduating dress and was clad in one which she had carded and spun and woven and dyed for her. Could she also have cut and made it after her own style and pattern, instead of from those obtained at the school, as Ruth insisted, she would have felt more that she could claim her for her own, and rejoice to have her go home and be just as the others of the family.

Mr. Keith had only time enough to speak to Ruth for a few minutes. He was filled with devotion to her and had, when he found that she was to be at the school another year, changed his purpose of winding up his business at the Court House, as he had intended, and at great cost and inconvenience determined to come there and attend to it himself.

He gave her hand a pressure which made her tingle from head to foot, and expressed his pleasure at her successful carrying out of her plans for an education, and at the prospect of her remaining in the school to continue her studies with Miss Camp, whom he assured her was one of the most accomplished and competent persons in his knowledge to lead and instruct her.

He finished by asking her the privilege of writing to her once a week and of a reply to each of his letters. He had never corresponded with a young lady, he said, and he hoped that she would not count the deficiencies of his letters against him, but, remember, that she was the only woman on the earth, except his mother, from whom he cared to receive a letter, unless upon business connected with his profession.

Ruth hesitated and said she had written very few letters in her life, and never one to a gentleman, and she feared that she would be a very uninteresting correspondent, and moreover she was doubtful of the propriety of her writing regularly to a young man in his position and of his age.

She at last gave her consent that he might write, adding, "I will tell Miss Camp, and will do just as she says about it."

When the promised letter came, it was, while polite and manly in whole and in every part, so unmistakably in its spirit an assumption of a claim on his part over her, that Ruth could not sleep that night and was so altered by the emotion in her heart, that her mother noticed it, and asked the cause.

She knew that a storm would come at once and stay as long as she remained in the house, if she told her mother all of what was in her heart, so she was forced to hide her soul from her, the one woman who should have helped her most. Under the circumstances, she decided

to go next day to Smith's Court-House to Miss Camp and tell her of the letter and ask her advice.

Her first trouble put before the faithful and wise friend was as to her duty to her mother. Miss Camp told her that in this she could only give her what she considered the principles of action, and leave to her the details of performance. Her mother had a natural and God-given right to her confidence, and was, within the scope of her ability, the proper one to advise her; but as her mother had no doubt, never written or received a letter from a young man, nor been in contact with anyone who had, and was by nature and education necessarily of another order of thought and being, she did not think that it was best to invite a disturbance by telling her mother of the letter, and that she had better, now that she was over twenty years of age, settle the matter herself.

After Miss Camp had read the letter, at the urgent and repeated request of Ruth, she said, "It shows clearly that the writer considers himself a suitor for your love, and that he is presuming that you know this. If you write to him in like spirit, he will be encouraged to go further and this correspondence will soon bring a declaration of love from him and a request that you marry him. Mr. Keith is a gentleman, and a very sincere man, and if it is not your intention to give him encouragement in his evident intention, you had better not enter into this matter further. It is for you to answer this in your own

heart. He is worthy of you, and I do not counsel you to drop the subject if your heart is his."

Ruth folded up the letter and put it in the envelope, then said sweetly and with a very becoming blush, "Miss Camp, my heart says write to him, and I will."

## XXVIII

### THE FEUD RENEWED

**I**T was quite a long time after the death of Clem Jones and the shooting of Ham Simms before the knowledge of it reached the neighbourhood of Salem Meeting-House. Uncle Harve and those who were with him did not speak of what they knew, except to those who would be careful to whom they talked of it.

In strange ways the Mack party finally heard rumours of what had happened and sent two of their number down to Yellowboro to investigate. These men could find out nothing definitely connecting the Stokes party with these murders, though they believed that Uncle Harve had either shot Ham Simms, or had got some friend to do it.

It was not that they cared much for the killing of these men that they investigated, and kept the talk going among themselves, but the clan spirit was so deeply rooted and intense with them, that they felt their honour—such honour—was involved in taking vengeance for the death of anyone who was on their side, however mean such a person might be.

The question of renewing the feud had often been considered, and but for the influence of Mack, who was now



active, having partly recovered from his wounds, it would have been done. Mack had reached the point of wishing that he could live in peace, and was very hopeful that he would be able to do so, when he and a number of his adherents were summoned to court at Smith's Court-House, as witnesses in an important case, where they found a large number of the Stokes people.

All day the men were meeting in the square, and in the court-room, and though nothing was said or done which was unpleasant, each side and the general community felt that danger was always near.

Just before the adjournment of the court for the night, a young man of the Stokes party was going down the stairs as fast as he could go, after the manner of young men, and just as he made the turn near the bottom, he, ran with a great deal of force into a brother-in-law of Clem Jones. The young man was as innocent of any intention of doing this as he possibly could be, but instead of stooping and picking up the man's hat, which he had knocked off, and giving it to him with an explanation and apology, he ran on out of the court-house, laughing immoderately.

The man whose hat was knocked off concluded that he was being abused and made a laughing-stock of out of mere wantonness, and, not stopping to think, turned and followed him into the yard and struck him a blow which almost killed him.

Being surrounded and prevented from doing further

harm to the prostrate man, he mounted his horse and rode rapidly from the town, muttering vengeance against all the Stokes people.

The town was soon vacated by the men of both parties, and the news flew far and wide that the desperate feud was renewed, and that another reign of terror had begun. The consultations had scarcely started when the news came that the young man was killed in his father's stable-yard by someone hidden in the patch of laurel a short distance above it.

The Macks gathered up the creek in their old fort and put it in condition for a siege, while the Stokes party were on the rocky bench of the mountain above Pete Finley's.

Bub Finley took down his father's rifle and patted it upon the stock, saying, "Y'u's fer Mack an' all his cussed tribe," and went up the slope of the mountain, along the same course he had gone years before with Ruth, when she ran with the news of the death of the Miller boys.

Uncle Harve had not come to this conference, nor had Percy Miller, and so disturbed was Stokes, and also some others, by this, that a messenger was despatched to go with discretion to Uncle Harve's cabin to find out why, if he was alive, he had not obeyed the call of the chieftain.

The messenger found the old man at home seated in the chimney corner, quietly scraping an axe-handle with

a piece of glass, and seemingly as calm as if he had never heard of the gathering on the mountain above him.

"Why on yearth air y'u heyh whun we's all now up in th' lorrel gettin' ready tuh meet th' Macks?" the messenger asked with some feeling, when he entered the room.

"I hain't goin' up thar, an' I hain't goin' tuh hev nothin' tuh do 'ith any o' this fuss," was the reply, which struck the messenger dumb with astonishment. Words would not come for a time, either to express feeling or wonder at what he saw and heard.

Uncle Harve meanwhile did not cease scraping the handle and only glanced at his visitor without giving him the steady and penetrating look he was expecting.

"Whut mus' I tell 'em when I gits back?" the man finally gasped.

"Tell 'em whut y'u seen an' heard."

"Am that all? They'll not be suited 'ith that leetle."

"Then tell 'em whun I wuz let off in Louisville, I promised th' jury whut let me off, an' 'lowed me tuh come home a free man, not tuh go 'ith y'u agin on sich goin's-on as y'u's at now. Whun they laid it out tuh me as plain as daylight, an' ast me not tuh do it agin, I answered 'em in jest two words, 'I promise,' an' y'u an' Stokes an' all ov th' balance on y'us knows as well as y'u knows y'r own names that means when Harve Turner says that, thar hain't no yearthly use o' any more talkin'."

"But, Uncle Harve, them 'll cum heyeh an' kill y'u in y'r own house, an' thar hain't no un 'll help y'u. Now cum on 'ith me an' tell 'em y'uself whut, y'u air goin' tuh do," was the solicitous rejoinder of the messenger.

"No, I hain't goin' one foot. Thar's nothin' more tuh tell 'em, an' ef th' Macks wants tuh cum heyeh an' kill me, they kin do it' ef they kin. A man kin die but onct, an' besides I reckon they knows that, th' ol' man 'ith his Winchester an' plenty o' powder an' lead in his own house 'll be likely tuh send some on 'em afore him tuh show th' way afore they gits him. Y'u needn't spen' any more time heyeh; I 'spec' they's wantin' tuh see y'u up thar."

There was nothing more to say, and when the messenger went away, the old man took down his gun, looked it over with his practiced eye, saw that it was ready for action, and went on with his work.

The report of the messenger, which was given with some exaggerations, caused the assembled men to conclude that Uncle Harve was out of his head, like Percy Miller, from whom they also had heard while the man was away interviewing Uncle Harve.

The old Elder had gone to see Percy Miller as soon as he had heard the news of the terrible lynching of Clem Jones, and told it to Percy in the hope thus to arouse him out of the melancholy into which he had fallen after the death of his comrade, Bill Scruggs, and the loss of his twin-boys.

Miller was difficult to influence for a time, and so the story was gone over slowly three times. The Elder, after the last recital of it, told him that now he could see how God avenged His own people, if they would only leave it in His hands.

"Ef y'u hed y'r way, y'u'd hev shot them two bad fellers an' hev bin content, but God 'lowed 'em, whun they'd run out o' th' county an' thought they wuz free from all they'd done, tuh cum tuh their death in them strange ways."

Miller smiled for the first time since his boys had been shot and said: "That's so, Elder, that's so!" He asked to be told all the details once more, and, when this had been done, he rose and walked round the room a few times, and then seating himself again beside his pastor, murmured, as he looked into his face, "It's bes' tuh leave it 'ith th' Lord, Elder, like y'u say, an' I'm a-goin' tuh do it frum this day for'ard."

And he did it, and that was the reason given the conclave on the mountain for his not being present with them.

Several men were shot within the next few days and the militia was called out by the Governor of the State to put the feud down by the strong arm of the law, at whatever cost. Three companies were now camped at the Court-House, but were only able to take care of themselves and made little headway, if any, against the feud.

Miss Camp had talked to several of the county officers, and a number of the people whom she could conveniently reach, about this and other feuds, and had made such impression that she was gratified to know that a sentiment was becoming general against all such violent customs.

Ruth Finley was among her first converts, and now asked to be permitted to visit the Stokes rendezvous, and get her brother away and all others that could be persuaded to come with them.

The Stokes party had been meeting with more things that they could not fathom than the position taken by Miller and Uncle Harve. In strange ways, sometimes spoken of as the "grape-vine" and then as the "little bird line," the Macks had learned that Uncle Harve and Miller were at home.

They at first thought that Uncle Harve was sick, and Miller was not able to leave home because of his mental trouble. The truth came to them, in some hidden way, and one morning the old Elder found a badly-written note in his front-yard. It was worded thus:

"Tell Harve Turner an' Percy Miller they is outen this thing, an' none on us is goin' to hurt 'em any more 'an we does wimen.

"MACK."

The Elder was "knocked off his pins," as he said, by this note, and hastened to get his horse and go and

spread the news. He thought he saw the end of all such dreadful feuds in this frank missive, and in what Ruth Finley had told him of the feelings of the people with whom Miss Camp had talked, at the Court House.

One of the most sensible and influential men had told Miss Camp that "we're seein' these things in a different way. We know how much better our children's gettin', an' what good things y'ur aimin' to hev 'em do, an' we're now goin' to stan' by the law an' see it carried out, cost what it will. Y'r school has got to the right place, an' we'll be a new people in a few years, ef y'u go on as y'u've begun."

When the old Elder reached Miller's house, he told him what he said was "the bes' news I've hearn fer many a day."

Miller was made glad, for he had been hiding out by day, and creeping home at night under cover of the darkness. He at once saddled his horse, and, leaving his rifle, rode on with the Elder to see Uncle Harve. He knew, after reading the Mack communication that he was safe anywhere and at any time, for whatever Mack might be and do, he would respect his written word and so would all his people, to whom he no doubt had communicated what he had done. It was a perfectly "safe conduct" in this time of war.

Uncle Harve was "taken aback" by the note also, though he had not been so careful of himself as had Miller.

"I sort o' felt it in me bones that I were safe whun I took th' stan' I did. I don't put all me weight on every bridge I goes on these days, but I've begun tuh hang on tuh a higher power. Sis Finley's gone up th' mount'in arter Bub, an' I 'spec' y'u hed better go fin' her an' help her out some, ef y'u kin."

"Ef y'u'll cum 'long an' show us th' way, we'll go right off now," the Elder added.

"No, I won't go 'long. Y'u hearn me promise whun I wuz let off at Louisville, an' I can't go among 'em agin. I won't go, an' that's all thar is on it! The soldiers might cum on 'em while I wuz thar, an' fin' me an' it ud look as ef I hed broke me word. They knows how I feels an' whut I'm goin' tuh do 'ithout me tellin' 'em."

When the Elder and Miller found the bulk of the Stokes party, Ruth Finley had them literally at bay. Bub was sullen, and defiant, but she was holding her own, with all the spirit of her father, and had just told them that she would never leave them without her brother, and he might as well come now as some other time, for he knew that she would carry out her purpose.

When the Elder appeared, with Miller, the acute situation was relieved, and when the note from Mack was read and commented on by the Elder in his preaching manner, there was considerable confusion in the camp.

Stokes was a right-minded man in all ordinary affairs, and was beginning to see that there must be an end to such feuds as they were now engaged in, or the country



would be utterly ruined. He saw the beginning of the end in the calling out of the troops, and as he had no heart for being tried for the killing of Mack, though he was sure he would be acquitted, said at once that he was for any honourable way out of the difficulty they were in. He thought it was all over when it was settled the last time, and was in it now only because his honour made it impossible for him to stay out of it when it was renewed.

"Sis, heyh, hez tol' us th' truth 'bout it, an' I hain't blamin' her one bit, seein' as she thinks 'bout it as she does, fer comin' arter her brother. I'll tell y'ur whut y'u do, Elder. Y'u an' Percy go an' git Uncle Harve an' y'u an' him ride up tuh Mack's fust, an' tell him we air willin' tuh make a child's bargain 'ith 'em. Ef they'll let *us* alone, we'll let *them* alone, an' we'll all go home an' go tuh work."

This was agreed to, and Ruth took back her statement that she would never leave them without her brother, and went home, after making him promise that he would come down to the house and see her and her mother just as soon as he got news from the Elder about the result of his meeting with Mack.

Uncle Harve listened to what the Elder had to say, but said not a single word in reply. He just rose and walked to the log-stable where his horse was, and, bringing him out, saddled him, and called out: "Elder, I'm ready; cum on!"

The Mack party was taken with much surprise at seeing the man they most dreaded, and whose conduct, since the renewal of the feud, had so knocked out all their calculations, riding up to their lair. Moreover he was unarmed—a condition they had never known him to be in, except when under arrest. They thought the end had surely come.

And it had come. "That's th' only way it 'll uver end, an' I don't see no use 'a-keepin' this thin' up forever," Mack said, and his followers were willing to join with him in this, or any other line of conduct he chose to take. As they were scattering to their homes, Mack said to Simpson: "I starts fer Missouri to-morrer, an' I wants y'u tuh go 'long 'ith me."

## XXIX

### MR. KEITH COMES TO COURT

**M**R. KEITH was now well established in business in Louisville, and, through his distinguished and wealthy partner, was already accepted by the best people of the city.

His pleasant ways, his fine appearance, and his ability as an orator and lawyer, caused him to be much sought after for all social functions, and he was deemed a splendid match for any young lady in the set in which he moved.

Rumour had begun to associate his name with that of his partner's beautiful and accomplished daughter with such persistency that he himself heard of it. He saw that something must be done to prevent an annoying situation. He was tremendously in love with Ruth Finley, and he had never lost the memory of her magnificent beauty. He actually admired her before she had fully developed and had gained her education, and now that she had showed her mastery over the peculiarly discouraging difficulties of her situation, his love was reinforced with unbounded admiration.

He had wished to wait two or three years for the money necessary to make a home of his own before for-

mally offering himself to Ruth; but he now saw that he must act for his own sake promptly, and that, if she could afford to wait, he could not.

Her letters, while in every way maidenly and modest, led him to see that she confided in his honour and esteemed him highly as a gentleman. Ruth was an example of mental vigour which had increased its power by accumulative force for several generations, amid purity of life and freedom to think in the midst of nature's grand text-books, untrammelled by conventionalities.

Seeing this in her letters, where she wrote of first principles and demonstrated with unfailing precision their necessity and use, and then led on to what is seen only by the eye opened by Him who giveth His unveiled glories to be seen by those whose devout spirits wait before Him in calm confidence, Keith realised that she was his equal in mind, as well as in all other endowments, and he was growing impatient for the time when he could give himself and all that he had into her keeping.

He resolved that he would wait no longer than the next term of court at Smith's Court House, which was soon to open, and give him his opportunity for seeing her.

On reaching the court, the day he arrived in town, he was chagrined at the nature and variety of the entanglements connected with his cases, and saw that his application must be intense and his work hard if he would succeed in gaining them.

His motto as a lawyer was to leave nothing undone, if he had to work all night to succeed in his legal battles. Here he was confronted with the necessity of making his burning impatience to tell Miss Finley of the state of his heart, wait upon the inexorable rule by which duty and honesty had bound him to his clients.

He called at the school and told Miss Finley that he had found unexpected difficulties in his legal work, and was confronted by some of the ablest lawyers in the State, whom he did not know were in the cases, and that he was forced, much against his desire, to forego for the next few days the pleasure of her company until he was through with his struggles in the court.

He gave her hand a warm pressure, and was gone, being in the house for not more than ten minutes. With heavy heart he went to his little, lonely room at the hotel, and laboured over his papers until the "wee small hours" of the morning.

When he went to the court next day, though weary in body and mind, he felt sure he could defeat his adversaries, if he could control himself and keep a clear mind and a calm spirit.

The opposing attorneys—retained with large fees by the "land-grabbers" in their desperation—counted Mr. Keith not strong enough to bring out their powers. The speculators had warned them, but the warning had only increased their superciliousness.

When they saw the business-like way in which he ar-

ranged his papers, the books he was to use, and the calm and confident aspect he displayed, the leading counsel whispered to his associates: "If that young fellow is not foolhardy, we are in for it, I reckon."

And they were in for it in a way which they could not understand, and before the court closed that day, they were glad to offer a compromise, and to take the cases out of court.

Mr. Keith simply replied: "Gentlemen, I never compromise a suit unless I feel I shall lose it. I am in the right in these cases, and am sure to win them, and I will not give you one acre of this land to withdraw your claims."

At this, the counsel became angry, and, with an oath, declared: "You will earn all you get then, young man," and left him.

The battle went on for days, and every subterfuge, legal and illegal, which the court would permit was tried, but though ready to drop from sheer exhaustion, Mr. Keith had obtained the verdict.

Two of the opposing lawyers were so chagrined that they would not speak to Mr. Keith, but the principal was magnanimous enough to offer his hand and say: "I did not expect to meet such a man as you have proved yourself to be, and I wish to tell you that I will not advise our clients to appeal these cases, as the principles upon which you have gained them cannot be changed. You have settled the land-titles for a large section of this

part of the State in these cases. I hope, the next time we meet, that we shall be on the same side."

After supper, Mr. Keith found the reaction from the strain so great that he was not able to carry out his determination to go to Miss Finley the first moment, he had leisure.

So he sent a note saying that he was so worn out by his work, that he was compelled to rest until the next day, when he hoped to see her.

Ruth had suffered much all these days. The bitterness of her draught, which she had expected to be so sweet, shook, if it did not overcome, her proud spirit. She had no knowledge of the nature of court proceedings, and so could not comprehend the exacting and severe nature of them. She shared the common supposition that lawyers have a very easy life, and that they were always able to command their time and enjoy themselves at the expense of other people, who were usually their victims.

When Mr. Keith took his hurried departure from her, she would have been angry, but for her confidence in him and the great love she bore him.

She looked for him every hour of the day, and from seven to nine o'clock in the evening her expectation was intense. If she could only have known the fearful struggle he was in, and how his heart was longing with all its power for her, she would have been saved most of her anxiety and pique.

As it was, she felt herself neglected, and disappoint-

ment grew into something like resentment. A man, to go to bed rather than come to spend the evening with her, when she was so anxiously waiting for him. "This is too much!" she thought, "and I'll let him go at once and forever, if it kills me."

Had she only known the forlorn state of the brave and honest man she loved, as with aching head and restless limbs he tossed on the hard and narrow bed in the dingy hotel, her admiration for his character and love for his pure and noble spirit would have been unchanged.

After a night of riotous and angry thoughts, she arose determined to go home as soon as she could make arrangements, and after breakfast, at which she could force herself to eat, only a little, she told Miss Camp that she must go home for a few days, and that she wished to set out at once.

The observant teacher saw that there was something wrong with her protégée, to cause her to come just then to such a conclusion. The trouble that Ruth was in had not escaped her, and she divined its cause; but feeling that it would all correct itself in due time, she thought it best that she should not interfere.

Now being sure that a crisis had come, and that there was danger that two lives would be wrecked, she at once exclaimed: "Ruth, you should not come to any hasty conclusions, nor take any ill-considered step. You may bring on a lifelong sorrow if you do."

Ruth for a moment resented this speech, but as she



looked into the careworn, loving face of her who had given so many wise counsels, her heart melted and she replied: "I want so much to do the right thing, Miss Camp, but why should he neglect me all these long and weary days."

"Why do you think he has neglected you? He told you of the great pressure which he had to bear, and how he expected to see you as soon as it was removed. He will keep his word, and you must wait and trust him."

"Look at this, please," Ruth said, as she handed the hastily written note of Mr. Keith's to Miss Camp.

As she read it, Miss Camp said with some feeling, caused no doubt by surprise that Ruth had not seen this for herself: "He is sick, I fear very sick; this note shows it. Oh, Ruth, why did you not see this?"

She did see it now, and her grief at the mistake she had made, and the probable consequences of it, if she had persisted in the course she had resolved to take, was as sudden and strong as her anger.

"Shall I go to him, Miss Camp?" she asked, as she paled and reddened by turns.

"No, I will go and see how he is in a few minutes. You had better go to your room and wait until I return."

One woman hastened to the hotel with a strange dread upon her heart, as she knew the effect of severe mental strain, when mingled with the excitement of contention and fierce debate. Her own father was an attorney in the East. The other woman, in her room, was upbraid-

ing herself for her misjudgment of her lover, fearful but hopeful with the sweetest hope that ever comes to a true woman.

Miss Camp was told that Mr. Keith had not come down from his room that morning, but that inquiry would be made immediately to ascertain his condition.

While Miss Camp waited with some anxiety, Keith came into the parlour, and, when she saw him, she was certain that his state was critical. There was nothing she could do in explanation of her call, but to say that both she and Miss Finley were made anxious by the note he had sent the evening before, and that she could not help calling to ask after him.

Sick as he was, Keith beamed at the thought that they were thinking of him, saying, "I was utterly worn out last night, after the days I have had to spend in court, and the nights I was forced to give to preparing my cases. I'll try to take something to eat and will then come at once to the school."

The first five minutes in the school cleared the air from all dark clouds. Keith waited no longer. What her heart had longed to hear her lover was saying to her, and Ruth found the resentment and fear of yesterday were all yesterday's, for to-day brought a new life; a life sweeter than she had dreamed, and which, she heard whispered many times into her ear, would never end.

### XXX

#### CONSTANCY'S REWARD

**T**HE laurel was in full bloom when the impatient lover came to the house of the old Elder on his way to take the bride who was waiting for him in the little cabin perched upon the mountain-side.

The glory of the flowers made all the mountain a mountain of beauty. They were now at the height of the gratitude they give to the God of nature for His preserving care through the winter, in the way they welcome the spring with its balmy air and the exhilaration of the life newly awakened, by just blooming as they are told to do by all the voices of their nature.

The mountaineers did not gather flowers and had never thought of decorating their houses with them, and Miss Ruth Finley did not think of the appropriateness of being married when thousands of acres of land had on their lovely array, until she walked to the back of the house on the morning of her wedding day to look over the prospect for the last time before she was to become a wife.

She stood looking at the old familiar mountain carpeted with the growing spring, and the thoughts which came acted as messengers sent of God to open the door

to other worlds of thought and feeling. She saw how the whole region had put on its holiday robes, that she might have this beautiful picture of her mountain-home to carry with her into her new life. She was glad as she received with ready mind the lessons of the flowers, and thanked God that He had given this wealth of beauty at the time of her wedding.

"Well, young man, y'ur heyeh I see, arter our Sis gal. It makes me heart sick tuh hev her go out o' this mount'in, but I likes y'u, an' trusts y'u, too, even ef y'u air frum a flat country an' lives in a place o' smells an' fuss; an' I lives in hopes our gal 'll be helped o' God tuh make y'u better than y'u air," wás the salutation given to Mr. Keith when he reached the old Elder's house, on the morning of the wedding.

"Now, mìn', I'm a-goin' tuh tie y'u up hard an' fas', an' every man 'roun' heyeh air a special guardeen fer Sis, an' when y'u gits her, y'u'll hev th love o' heaps o' th' proudest an' faithfules' hearts that ever wuz in human bodies 'ith her."

Keith and the Elder walked to the Finley place, but Uncle Harve could not come, because the wounds in his breast had broken out afresh, and he was prostrate, and in danger of speedy death.

The Elder was dazed for a time when the news came to him, but after some thought he asked to see Ruth, to whom he said, "I jest knows that Harve air in a mighty heap o' trouble, 'cause he can't be heyeh an' see y'u

married, an' I don't see as how I kin hev a han' in dis-app'intin' him."

Ruth bowed her head for a moment till perceiving the Elder's wish, she said: "You speak to mother, and I will ask Mr. Keith if we can't all walk along the mountain, and have the marriage by Uncle Harve's bedside."

Mr. Keith was much touched when he was told of the sacrifice his bride was willing to make for the poor old dying man, and was ready to act as she desired.

Mrs. Finley was stubborn for a while, but when the Elder asked her what she thought would be Pete's wish in the matter, if he could express it, she said: "Pete 'ould put his han' on Sis's shoulder an' say, 'Y'u's my own gal, Sis, an' like y'r dad. Let's be off right now.'"

So they formed in line, the Elder and Mrs. Finley in front, and Keith and Ruth immediately behind them, going through the blooming laurel to Uncle Harve's little cabin to be married.

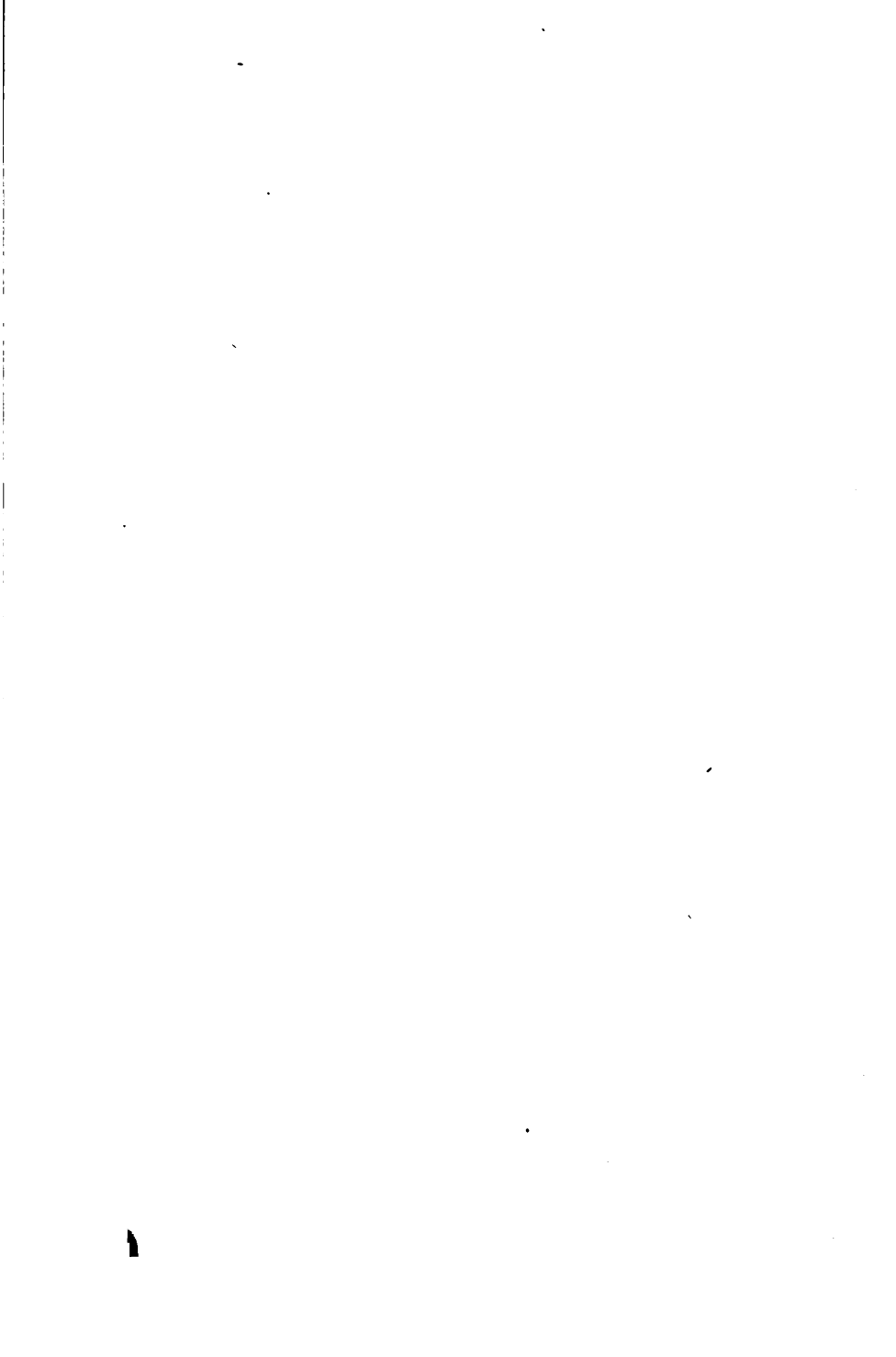
When near the house, Mr. Keith broke off a bunch of the laurel and handed it to Ruth, saying, "Please hold this while we are being married, for it is the one flower which suits you this day, and, as we think of it hereafter, it will bring to our memories the dear old everlasting hills where it and you bloomed."

Uncle Harve was too weak to sit up or talk much, and when he was able to take in the meaning of the coming of the party to his cabin, was more overcome than the Elder had ever seen him.

Keith and Ruth stood where his aged eyes could look upon them, and when the long and rambling discourse which the Elder used as a marriage ceremony was over, and Ruth went to his bedside to bid him farewell, he took her hand and said: "Good-bye, honey. Uncle Harve loves y'u all he kin, an' he jest naturally knows y'u'll be mighty happy all y'r born days 'ith this Keith man. I'll not be heyeh when y'u comes agin, but y'u'll fin' me grave up yander back o' th' house jest at th' feet o' Pete and Bill Scruggs, though I hain't worthy to lie aside 'em."

And so it was that when the happy bride and groom were on their bridal trip, the ground was opened and the brave old mountain Kentuckian was laid to sleep his last sleep where his heart, which had never flinched in any test, told him he ought to lie.

THE END



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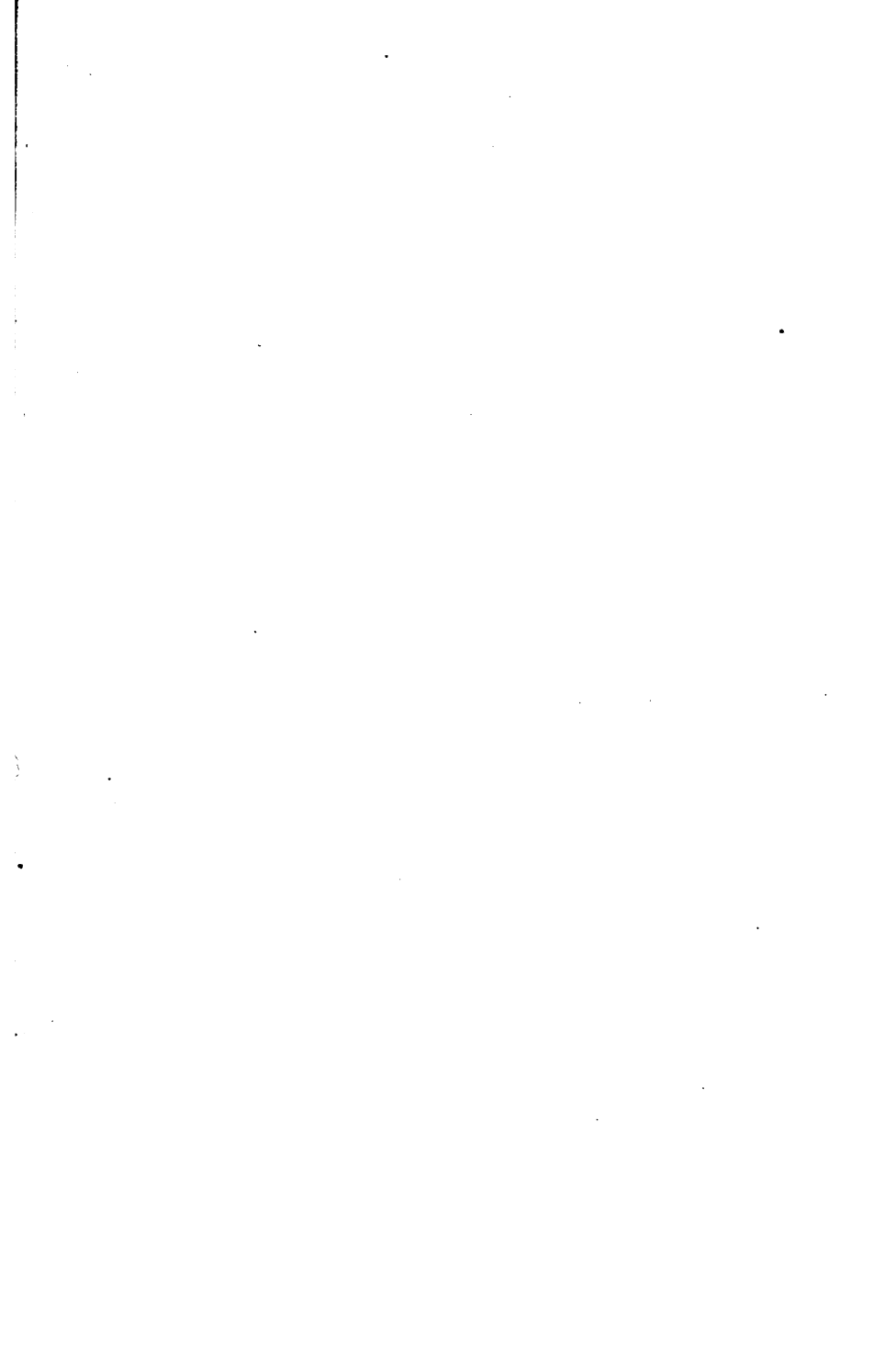
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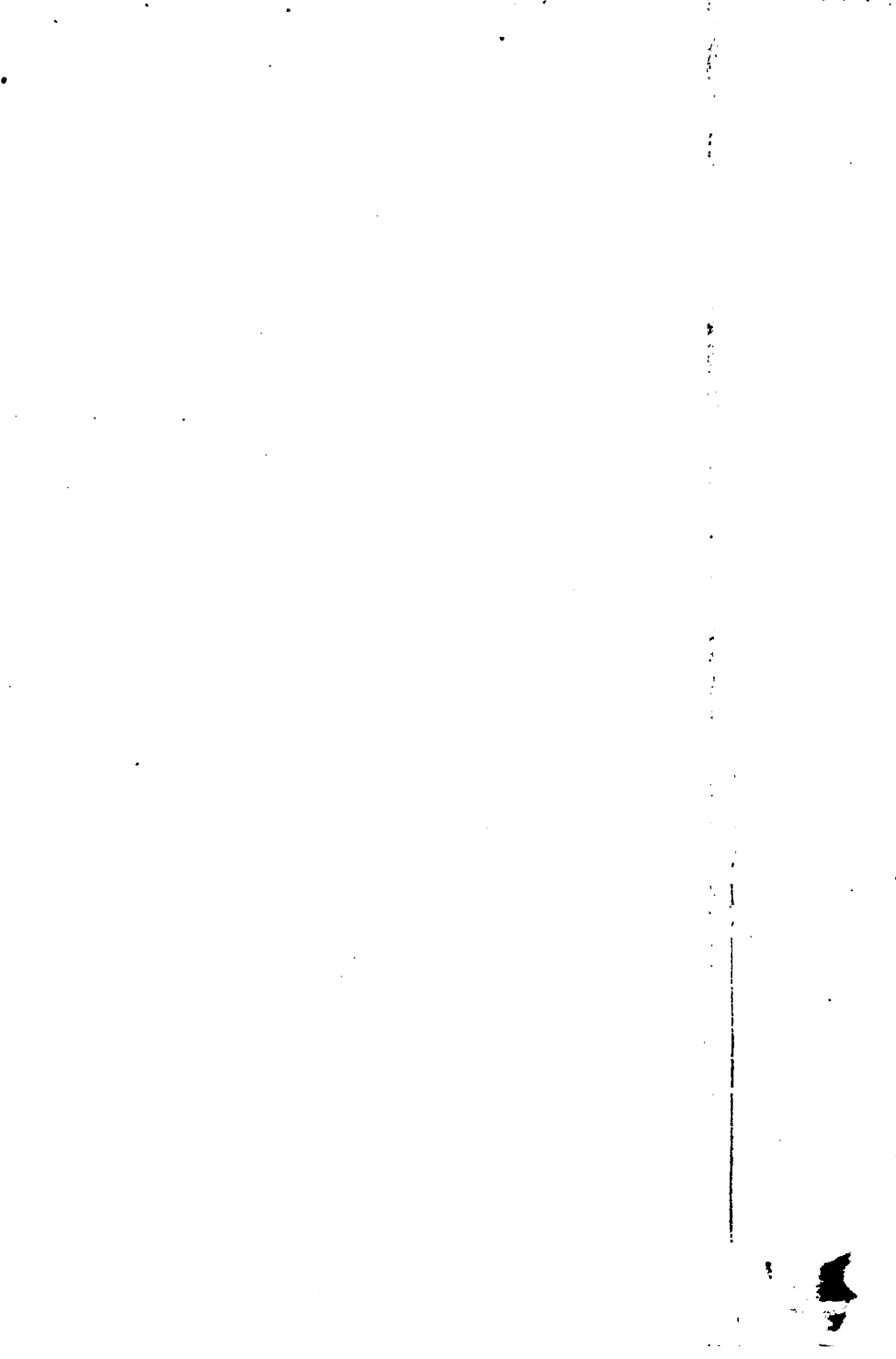
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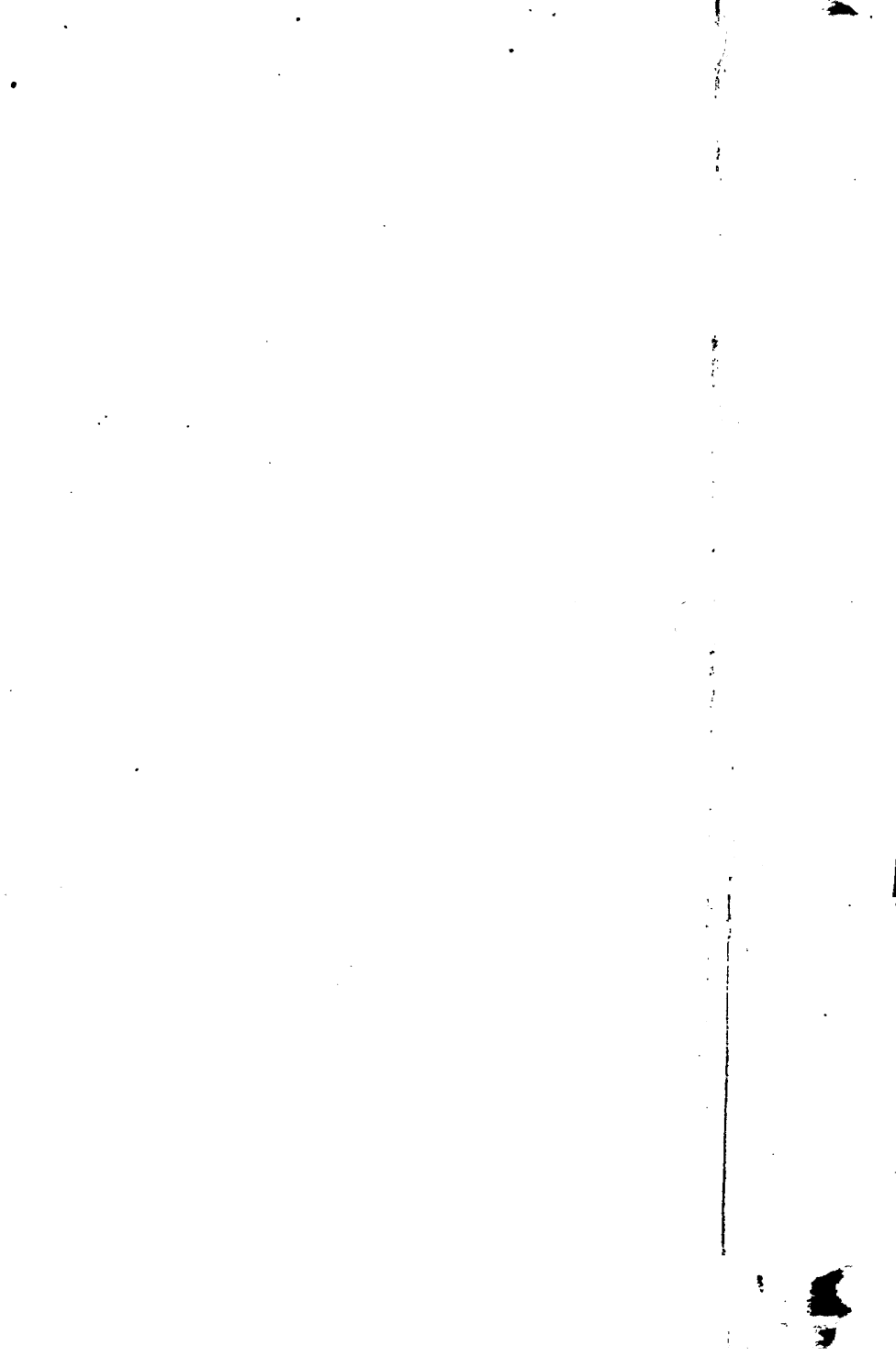
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